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STORIES FOR THE

CHRISTIAN

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STORIES

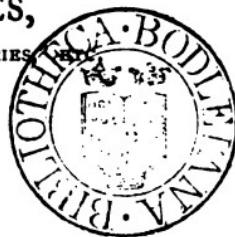
FOR

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

BY

C. A. JONES,

AUTHOR OF "CHURCH STORIES."



VOL. IV.

Fourth Sunday after Easter to Fourth Sunday after
Trinity.

LONDON :

JOSEPH MASTERS AND CO., 78, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLXXV.

251. 2. 420.

LONDON :
J. MASTERS AND CO., PRINTERS,
ALBION BUILDINGS, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE, E.C.

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OLD PEGGY'S STORY.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

"So shalt thou bear the toils
Thy GOD appoints to thee,
So shalt thou serve thy GOD
In happy liberty."

IT was my greatest treat when I was a little girl to go and drink tea with Old Peggy. She lived in our village, in a little cottage upon the green, and she always wore a black dress, and a white cap and apron, and her old face always had such a sweet smile upon it—a smile that made the children run to her as a friend, and caused the babies to hold out their little arms, and kick and crow, by way of showing that they wanted her to take them into her loving old arms.

We lived in a grand house and had lots of servants, and everything that we could possibly want. I suppose our cakes were good, I know our cook was supposed to do everything well, but the cakes at the Hall certainly did not come up to the cakes at Old Peggy's tea-parties, at least so my brothers and sisters and I agreed in those far away, happy childish days of ours.

Peggy had been a servant in our family when she was a girl, and now she had an annuity left her by my grandfather, and on this she lived, and on this she gave those frequent tea-parties in that sweet little cottage of hers.

She used often to come up to the Hall to see us ; whenever we were ill my mother sent for her ; and I remember Claude, my youngest brother, thought her very superior to the doctor, and on one occasion stoutly refused to put out his tongue to that worthy functionary, saying that he wanted "Dr. Peggy."

I remember too that whenever the boys cut their fingers, or otherwise injured themselves, they were sent to the cottage to have their wounds attended to ; and once, I am ashamed to say, I tied up my hand in a pockethandkerchief, *hoping* thereby to elicit some sympathy and to

be sent to Peggy's cottage ; my mother, however, inquired into the cause of my appearing at dinner with my arm in a sling, and I was obliged to confess the truth, and received a severe reprimand and a warning that if I repeated the offence, I should never be allowed to go and see my dear old friend at all.

Of course all these reminiscences date back to my very childish days ; afterwards I learned to look upon Peggy with a mingled feeling of veneration and curiosity, utterly different from the cake and jam affection of my baby years.

One thing was a matter of surprise to us all, and was duly discussed by us, first in the nursery, and then in the schoolroom : Peggy always looked bright, and cheerful and smiling, and yet my father and mother, and old Aunt Tabitha, never spoke of her but as "poor old soul," "poor dear old Peggy."

We settled it amongst ourselves that their pity was utterly wasted and misplaced, Peggy was not poor at all, she was remarkably happy, had a sweet little cottage, and did everything she liked ; no, she certainly was not poor, old Granny Parker in the next cottage *was* poor, she always looked dirty and was always grumbling about her rheumatics, and we had once heard her say

she never tasted a bit of butter or cake except what Peggy gave her.

I could tell you a great many stories of my childish years, I am getting an old woman now, and streaks of white are coming fast, amongst the dark hair of which my father used to be so proud, but I am not writing a story of myself or of those belonging to me, but of Peggy, my tried old friend, the memory of whose patience has come to me, and cheered me in many a sorrow, and made me try as *she* did to learn the secret of that peace which neither the world's joy nor the world's sorrows can give nor take away. I must, however, tell you how it was I first heard what Peggy's secret was.

It was an April Sunday,—almost the last day of the month, and I was lying on a little sofa, drawn into the window of my mother's morning room, and looking out into the garden which was her especial pride and delight, and where all the spring flowers, ranunculus and anemones, and crocuses, were blooming in rich luxuriance, revelling in the bright glad sunshine of that delicious afternoon.

I was listless and weary; I had just recovered from a bad attack of scarlet fever, and had been *a prisoner* for the last four weeks; not allowed

to see my brothers and sisters, except from the window, and I was somewhat more than usually aggravated on this beautiful Sunday by the fact that the doctor had said the day before, that he thought I might go out, and when he had come to see me in the morning he had shaken his head (oh how we had always hated that shake of the head) and talked gravely about warm sunshine and a treacherous east wind, and I had been condemned to the morning room, at least for that day.

I heard the children's voices in the avenue, the sound of their merry laughter fell upon my ear somewhat discordantly ; I was very cross, (remember I had been ill, and don't be too hard upon me,) and I have often wondered since, how my gentle mother bore with all my ill-temper through that long trying period of convalescence. I was just twelve years old, getting quite a young lady, every one said ; I don't think I wanted to be a young lady, I had an idea that when once I reached that stage, I should not be allowed to play cricket with Harry, or climb trees with Claude.

I don't know if young ladies of twelve years old cry now-a-days when they cannot do all they wish, *at least when they are in full health* ; but

I *do* know that on that Sunday afternoon I cried because I could not go out into the sunshine, and run about the avenue with the others.

"My poor darling, it is hard, is it not?" said my mother, kissing me.

I was ashamed of myself then, and declared it was not hard at all, that I was quite happy sitting with her, only I didn't know what had come to me lately, I felt so silly.

Then she petted me, and talked to me, and told me how GOD sends us weakness and weariness to try our faith, and how even those as young as I was, could please Him by struggling against it, and trying to bear it patiently. I remember she said it was sometimes worse than pain, and I was so glad she knew that, for I had tried to be good during those few bright days I had been lying there; but the very gladness of the outer world seemed only to make it more difficult.

"Mother always understands everything," I mused, "and if she knows so well how hard it is for me, GOD knows it even better, and He will help me, and forgive me."

"Now, darling, I am going to leave you for a while, but I have invited a friend to come and have tea with you; can you guess who it is, *Maude?*"

"Peggy, is it not, mother?"

"Yes, dear, poor old Peggy," and I thought as my mother spoke that a tear stood in her soft dark eye.

"Mother, dear, why do you always call Peggy poor? she isn't a bit."

"You are quite right, Maude; it is hardly a proper term to apply to her, but we all got into the habit of it when her great sorrows came upon her, and we have never broken ourselves of it."

"Has Peggy had sorrows?" I asked.

"Sorrows, my child! I should think she had."

"And yet she always looks so happy and cheerful."

"Yes, Maude, because she has a secret, which would have enabled her to bear yet greater burdens, and yet be as she is."

"Tell me her secret, mother."

"Ask her if she will tell you her story, Maude; sometimes I think it does her good to talk; and when you have heard it, try and guess her secret: it is not a hard one, dear, it is what we all ask for in to-day's collect."

I was going to open my little Prayer Book and turn to the Fourth Sunday after Easter, when there came a gentle knock at the door,

and Peggy appeared, looking as trim and clean as usual, and carrying in her hand a sweet red rose.

"It's the first that has bloomed in my little garden, Miss Maude ; I've been watching it all the week, and the sunshine to-day has brought it out beautifully."

I pulled the old face down to me, and gave the dear old thing a kiss ; then my mother said she must go to father, and she would send up our tea, and so Peggy and I were left alone.

"Peggy," I said, "tell me your secret."

"I haven't got one, my dear."

"Yes, you have, mother said so."

"No, indeed I haven't, dear Miss Maude."

"She said it was in the collect for to-day," I persisted, and I read the beautiful prayer aloud.

"O Almighty God, Who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; Grant unto Thy people that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise ; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found ; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen."

There was ever so faint a tinge of colour

upon Peggy's face when I had finished reading, and she said,

"Yes, I understand now what the dear lady means ; it might tire you, Miss Maude, to hear an old woman's story, but I'll make it as short as I can, and tell you mine, if you will have the patience to listen to it."

"Make it as long as you can, Peggy," I answered, "I could not be tired of it if it went on until twelve o'clock to-night."

"I am afraid I should though," replied the old woman, with one of her bright smiles, and then she began her story.

This day thirty years ago I was married. It was not the same day of the month as it is to-day ; my wedding-day was on the first of May, but the Sunday that came before it was this very Sunday, the Fourth Sunday after Easter : but I'm beginning at the wrong end, Miss Maude. I must tell you just a little of the time that came before that.

I was an orphan ; my father and mother died when I was very young,—so young that I do not remember them at all,—my grandmother took me to live with her, and my home when I was a *little girl*, was where my home is now that

I am an old woman,—the old cottage on the green.

I was a very happy child, and when I grew up to be a girl I was happy still ; my dear old grandmother was so good to me, she taught me to love and fear GOD, and to go to Church and to Holy Communion, and to think that His service was the best service of all, and that that alone could bring real, true, lasting joy into my life.

When I was fourteen years old, my first real trouble came to me. One night, grandmother said she was tired, and would go to bed early ; she kissed me, and blessed me, and made me read her a chapter in the Bible ; it was the 22nd chapter of Revelations, all about the Beautiful City, and I shall never forget the smile that was on her face as she listened to me : when I went to take her her cup of tea—as I always did in the morning—she was lying there with just that same smile upon her face and with the Bible which had been grandfather's in her hand. Miss Maude, the dear old woman had gone to sleep, never to awake again but upon the other shore.

They were hard days that came to me afterwards, although everybody was very kind, and your grandmother took me to live at the Hall,

and tried to make it feel like home to me ; and so it did after a bit, but you can fancy how I missed the one who had been father, and mother, and all to me.

Your father was a little boy then, Miss Maude, and I was his nurse, and he loved me very much, and somehow I think that the love of a little child is the best cure for the troubles that God sends us. I think it is because children are nearest to the angels in their innocence and purity.

There had come a new schoolmaster to the village school, an old grey-haired man, bringing with him a young son, as bright a looking lad as you ever saw, a sailor on board one of Her Majesty's ships.

I used to go to the school sometimes with a message from my lady, and Master Frank (your father, Miss Maude) used to like to stand and watch the boys and girls at their lessons, and I don't know how it all came about, only I did not one bit expect it, but one day William Seaford told me he loved me, and asked me to be his wife. I felt very happy as I heard the words, and I said I must ask my lady : I went home, told her all, and she was kind and good as she always was, and told me she was very

very glad that I was likely to have such a good husband, for there was nobody in all the village who had not something good to say of William.

I was only seventeen years old, and of course we were not to be married for a very long time ; William had to go ever so many voyages, and to be higher up in the service and get more pay, before he could make a home for a wife.

I waited five years, and then one day I received a letter written in a strange handwriting ; and that letter told me news that was at once good and bad.

William had been severely wounded in an engagement on the coast of Africa, and had lost his right arm ; but he was quite well, and was coming home at once ; and of course he would be pensioned off, and never be able to go to sea any more ; he thought of going into business of some kind.

He arrived in England, looking just the same as ever except for that empty sleeve hanging from his sailor's jacket ; but I was very proud of him, and thought him a great hero, and I told him he should never feel the want of his right arm, so long as he had me.

He took a little shop in Wingfleet, a sea-coast village about fifty miles from here ; he said he

must live in sight of the sea he loved so well. It was I think something of a trouble to him to have to give up all his hope of rising in the Navy, but he was very good about it, and used to say that it would have been hard to leave me at home, and that whatever *was* was right.

At last our wedding day was fixed—the first of May,—I was to be married from the Hall,—it was in this very room that my lady called me in, when I was dressed for Church, and gave me a wedding present of fifty pounds. I remember that Fourth Sunday after Easter, my last Sunday with my kind mistress.

The collect that you were reading just now, Miss Maude, had been grandmother's favourite of all the collects, and when I heard it in Church amidst all my happiness, I thought that changes might come into my life, and I asked GOD to fix my heart, where the only true joys were to be found. And when afterwards I knelt at the Holy Altar, a feeling of great peace came to me. I went for a walk with William in the afternoon, and he drew a piece of paper out of his pocket, and showed me a plain wooden cross which he had made for me, just cut out with a penknife with his left hand,—there was a piece of cord attached to it, ready to hang round my neck.

"It's my wedding present to you, Peggy," he said, "I showed it to old Mrs. Hogg last night, and she said it was unlucky to give a Cross, that there would be crosses enough in our lives, that there must be in every life, without my giving you this; but I thought, Peggy, that the poor old woman did not know what she was saying, for after all it's the thought of Him Who died upon the Cross for us, that makes us bear all the sorrows that come to us patiently."

"Yes," I answered, "I like it better than anything else you could have given me, William; it's really there on the Cross as it were, that among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, the only true joys are to be found, for it's through the Cross that we win the crown."

"Yes, Peggy, I suppose we must expect to have trouble; but if we keep the true joys in sight, we may be happy even in our sorrow."

He hung the Cross round my neck, and here it is still, Miss Maude, and the only request I have left on the little bit of paper in my old desk is, that it may be buried with me.

We were married on May-day, and went to our new home, just in sight of the sea that William loved so well.

It was a small drapery business he had taken,

and it thrrove wonderfully ; we got on much better than we had ever dared to expect we should, there was nothing but sunshine in our lives ; I used to say when I walked with my husband upon the beach on summer evenings, that no one in the world could be as happy as I was.

"There must be clouds hanging about somewhere," he would answer, laughing at my enthusiasm ; "there must be breakers ahead, although it may be ever so far in the distance, but that does not matter, little woman, if our hopes are fixed where the only true joys are to be found."

Each year of our lives however seemed to bring us greater happiness ; three little children were born to us,—two boys and a little girl,—William loved them all dearly, but I think that little Margaret, "Daisy," we always called her, was his favourite, although he never would confess to it.

One summer's day when Daisy was two years old, she put her hand to her head, and said it hurt her very much, and before evening came she lay tossing about her little bed, and we knew that she was dying. She had been playing on the beach with the boys in the morning, and the doctor said *she had had a sunstroke*.

Only once she opened her sweet blue eyes, and stroked her father's empty sleeve, and smiled, and said, "Poor Daddy," and then the angel came and took our darling home.

"It's the first change that has come into our life," William said to me, as he led me away from looking upon that sweet little face; "and it seems to me, Peggy, as though it was another joy laid up for us where the only true joys are to be found."

I grasped my Cross, and tried to be resigned as he was, but it was hard to lose our little Daisy. I am afraid I thought it hard just then to give her up to Him to Whom she belonged.

We had our two little boys still, Willie and Frank, and although I say it that shouldn't, Miss Maude, they were boys to be proud of. They both of them took after their father; fine bright-eyed lads, with curly hair, and rosy cheeks, that always looked as though they had just been washed with the fresh sea breezes.

They used to go to the village school, and the Master gave us a grand account of both of them. "Never were such lads for learning," he said, and yet they were as fond of play as two young kittens, and as daring and venturesome as lions.

One day, when Willie was twelve years old, and Frank ten, they came to us, and asked if they might go out into the woods with some of their schoolfellows ; the Master had given a holiday to some of the best boys, and they were going on a nutting expedition, and Frank promised me nuts enough to last all the winter.

Of course we let them go, we felt we could trust them anywhere ; only we told them not to get into mischief, and on no account to think of bathing, for the current in the direction in which they were going was very strong, and frequent accidents had happened there.

We watched them start off, half wild with excitement. Willie's arm was round Frank's neck, and the younger boy's sweet voice was carolling out one of his favourite songs, "The Land of the Leal." The echoes of the words came back to us long after they were out of sight, and I remember I turned away with a sigh, and William asked me what was the matter with me ?

"Nothing," I answered, "at least, nothing much ; only I was thinking, William, that the world is very bright, although our Daisy is not in it."

"Yes, Peggy ; but surely we can be glad that our darling *is in the 'Land of the Leal?'*"

I don't know why it was that all through that day I could not throw off the feeling of depression that was upon me, and when evening came, I was restless and anxious, and could settle to nothing. William read me the Psalms and lessons, as he always did, (for there was no such thing as a daily service in those days, Miss Maude, at least, not at Wingfleet,) and I listened to the words, but somehow they did not sink into my heart, and I kept looking at the old clock which stood in the corner of our little sitting-room, and wondering when the boys would come home.

Eight o'clock struck, and then I could no longer hide my anxiety.

"William," I said, "something must have happened, they are so late."

"Nonsense, Peggy, dear," he replied, "this is the pleasantest part of the day. Give them another hour, if they are not home by nine, I shall go and meet them; depend upon it, they are dawdling along the road, cracking their nuts."

The hour wore its weary length along, and then nine struck, and William took his hat, and went out of the door without speaking.

Then I fell on my knees, and asked God to-

help me, if trouble was near, if another terrible change was coming into my life.

Suddenly I heard voices outside, hushed voices, as though something was to be hidden from me, and above them all William spoke, and what he said was,

"Willie, you had better tell her : tell her Frank has been badly hurt."

I opened the door then, and saw what had happened. I knew that Frank—my beautiful, noble boy—had gone to sing GOD's own songs in the Land of the Leal.

His father and a neighbour were carrying him ; there was a white handkerchief over his face, and they laid him down on his own little bed, and I took off the covering which hid his sweet features from me.

Very calm and peaceful my boy looked ; only just under that thick curl on his forehead which he was always tossing back, there was a wound, and a mark of blood.

I asked no questions then, I felt William's arm round me, and I heard him say that another joy was laid up for us, and I saw my poor little Willie's pale face, and my heart sank within me as he cried, "Oh, Frank, Frank, come back to me;" and then I don't know what happened.

When I awoke to consciousness, my husband was sitting by my side, with a look upon his face which I had never seen there before.

"William, tell me all," I said.

And he told me how our boy had met his death.

"Amos Smith went with him," he said ; "none of them asked him to go, for they none of them like him, and Willie told him that having been expelled the school, he had no right to join their party. He answered that he had as much right to the woods as they had, which of course was true.

"All passed off smoothly enough until the evening, and then Amos Smith, who had carried a gun with him all day, dared Frank to sing some profane song.

"'I will not sing it,' answered the boy ; and Willie said afterwards that his face was like the face of an angel as he spoke ; 'I will not sing it : father and mother wouldn't like it, and besides, it's a bad song, it wouldn't be right for me to sing it.'

"'Come, tune up, or I'll shoot you,' said Smith, laughingly.

"'I will not,' answered Frank.

"There was a moment's pause, a click, the

report of a gun, and Frank was dead. And Peggy," said my husband, when he had told me the story, " I like to think that it was something of a Martyr's death that the lad died ; it was because he would not do what he thought to be wrong—it was suffering for the truth."

I knew now what that look was upon William's face ; it was a look of triumph, because of our boy's glorious death.

I cannot tell you all that followed, Miss Maude. How there was an inquest, and Amos Smith was committed for trial, but because of all that William said for him he was acquitted ; in fact, it was right that he should be, for, poor lad, he had no idea that the gun was loaded.

He was the only son of a widowed mother, and he had been a bad boy until the day when our Frank died ; but then a change came over him. He did not get good all at once, but he used to come and talk to William and to little Willie, (it was many a long day before I could bear to look upon his face,) and he began to go to Church, and to be a better lad to his mother, and we felt that out of our sorrow, a great joy had come into Widow Smith's lonely life.

My story is getting too long, Miss Maude, I must bring *it to a close*. Willie went to sea,

and his father and I were left at home. We were happy still, although the sunshine was not quite as bright as it had been. Our boy was the great comfort of our lives, and when he came home from his long voyages it seemed as though William and I were young again.

The last time our little cottage ever echoed with his merry laugh was one September. He was looking handsomer than ever, he was more loving and affectionate than he had ever been before, and he used to talk of Frank very very often ; he was very good too to Amos Smith, trying to cheer up the somewhat surly morose lad, and begging him not to dwell upon the past in the way he did.

" You do your duty to your mother now, Amos," he said, " she was telling me yesterday she could not get on without you, that if anything happened to you she should die."

And poor Amos could only wring his friend's hand and say, " I brought such trouble upon you, and yet all the good that is in me I owe to you."

That night a terrible storm swept over Wingfleet Bay. Many of the fishing boats were out, Amos Smith's amongst others. We could none of us sleep ; we all got up and went to the

beach, and suddenly there was a great cry, one of the little smacks was seen striking on a rock.

Willie stood at our side. "Father, mother, I must try and save them," and we saw him take off his straw hat for a minute, and then seize a rope and go out into the sea.

I don't know what happened next. I heard a shout of joy, I knew that our boy had saved the lives for which he had ventured his own.

"All safe;" oh, how we thanked God for the words; Miss Maude, we had to thank Him more before the morning dawned, for our Willie was indeed safe—gone to Frank and to little Daisy, in the Land of the Leal.

He had saved Amos Smith and another man, but he had been dashed against the rocks, and received some internal injury from which it was impossible for him to recover.

They carried him to Widow Smith's cottage, which was nearer than ours, and the clergyman came, and gave him the Blessed Sacrament, and I don't think we would either of us have kept him with us even if we could, for he said he was so happy, and he and Frank and Daisy would be waiting for us on the other side.

And so William and I were left alone,—sundry and manifold changes had indeed come

into our lives, but the thought of the true joys had helped us to bear them.

Fifteen years ago, Miss Maude, William was taken from me ; he was not ill very long, and one night when I told him how dreary my life would be without him, he said, " Peggy, we shall meet again, where no more changes nor chances shall part us."

And now, Miss Maude, only one change can come to me ; will you ask God when you say your prayers that Old Peggy may go in God's good time to where the only true joys are to be found ?

" Peggy," I said, kissing my dear old friend, and trying to keep back my tears, " I have found out your secret, I know why through all your sorrows you always smile and are cheerful."

RICHARD'S WAY.

Rogation Sunday.

"Many foes are round about,
Foes within and foes without ;
Our temptations Thou didst share,
Thou didst once our weakness bear :
By those trials we would plead,
Into no temptation lead."

"I TELL you I will speak, I will say what I think, he's a coward and a sneak, and a bully, and there's no name bad enough for him, and nobody shall stop me ; so it's no good."

It was a boy who spoke ; a lad of about fifteen years of age, a handsome fellow, at least you could imagine that the face was handsome, when it was not distorted by passion as it was now, as he stood on that bright May morning, his head

thrown back, his fist clenched, his dark eyes gleaming with passion.

Listening to him, with a look of mingled love and terror on her face, was a young girl, who you could see at a glance was his sister ; there was the same clear olive complexion, the same dark hair, and eyes, but Lizzie Grenville's expression at that moment was so utterly different to her brother Richard's, that after discovering the likeness you had to look again to see wherein it lay.

"Richard, Richard, please don't speak so ; you know you will be sorry for it by-and-by ; you always are sorry when you have spoken words like these, for you know how wrong it is."

"Hold your tongue, Lizzie, and mind your own business ; there are times when one must speak out : girls never know anything, nor understand anything."

"Don't they ?" answered poor Lizzie, meekly.

"No, of course they don't."

And the little loving sister believed that Richard was right, just as she always believed every word he uttered, and she went up to him, and pushed the dark hair back from the heated brow, and kissed the boy tenderly and whispered : " You will come to Church with me, Richard, dear?"

He put her away, not unkindly, and yet with something of the imperious air which had won for him the name of "King Richard" amongst his companions.

The brother and sister were orphans ; their father had been a solicitor in the market town of Hanbury, and he and his wife had died within one short year of each other, leaving their children to the care of an old maiden aunt of Mr. Grenville's, who had done her best through their baby years to spoil them by her foolish indulgence, and who, as they grew up to be boy and girl would never allow a fault of any kind to be found with them.

She was a dear loving old soul—was that old Aunt Patty, she only erred on the side of love, but love sometimes makes fatal mistakes, and perhaps it is a part of Infinite Wisdom, that so it should be, that we should learn to know that no such thing as perfect, unerring affection is to be found on earth, that there is only one Love that never errs, never changes, never grows cold.

Richard's great fault was his imperious temper ; he was a generous warm-hearted fellow, but if anything thwarted his will, if things did not turn out exactly as he wanted them to turn out,

his wrath knew no bounds ; he did not care what he said, his face would flush up, and out would come a torrent of words, for which half an hour afterwards he would be sorry.

And Aunt Patty had a way of laughing at him ; when he was quite a little fellow she used to think it "so funny" to hear him storm and rave about the smallest thing, and as he grew older she tried to believe it was manly of him to speak out, and tell people what he thought of them in the way he did ; she never had had any misgivings about it until quite recently, when one day just before our story begins, the Vicar called on her and spoke to her on the subject.

Now Aunt Patty reverenced the Vicar more than she did any other human being, and when he began to find fault with Richard, she did not get angry as she would have done, if any one else had spoken against her darling, but she knitted away very fast and tried to look unconcerned, although deep down in her poor loving old heart, there was an unspoken fear—a fear lest after all she should have failed in her duty to her orphan nephew and niece.

" He's such a manly fellow," she said.

" Yes, my dear Miss Grenville, I know you think so, but I cannot say that I agree with you,

I call it a cowardly thing to say that to others when you are in a rage, which you must be sorry for afterwards. It is a kind of stabbing and wounding, of which I cannot approve, it does not do much harm to those to whom these things are said ; it may provoke bad temper in them, but as a rule most people are calm and quiet when they see another in a passion. And Miss Grenville," and the Vicar's voice was low, and his manner very grave—"Miss Grenville, we have one example of perfect Manliness, of perfect unswerving Courage ; we never hear that all through His most Sacred Life our Blessed LORD was angry at the taunts and the insults offered to Himself; once only we are told of His just wrath, and that was when He drove the buyers and sellers out of His FATHER's House. He is our great Example, in His Footsteps we must try to follow."

Aunt Patty put down her knitting now, and the tears stood in her eyes. "Mr. Carteret," she answered, "I see that I have been wrong ; will you speak to the boy?"

"I have spoken very often ; before he was confirmed, and again before his first Communion. I told him all that was in my mind, all that I have told *you* to-day, and he promised me that

he would try to do better, but I am afraid he trusted in his own strength and failed."

"Then what would you have me do?"

The Vicar's voice faltered as he answered :

"Send him away from Hanbury ; it is his only chance."

"I cannot," answered Aunt Patty, "it would kill Lizzie, and me too."

"No, it would not; I know it sounds hard, dear Miss Grenville, but the lad has got beyond your control, and Lizzie's blind idolatry does not help him to be better ; I cannot bear to give you pain, but you asked my advice, and I have given it."

Aunt Patty rubbed her spectacles, and wiped her eyes, and thanked her old friend, and said she must think about it ; it could not be just yet anyhow, and the Vicar knew that it would not be at all, unless something happened which would render some step of the kind absolutely necessary.

"You will come to Church with me, Richard?" Lizzie had said on that sweet May morning of which we are speaking.

And we have seen how Richard pushed his loving little sister away, and would not listen to her pleading words.

Let us take a glance at what *had* passed to

provoke King Richard, and cause him to speak as we find him speaking at the commencement of our story.

There was a lad in Hanbury named Walter Hargrave, a shy quiet gentle boy who was Richard's great friend ; they were as unlike as they could possibly be in everything, and yet since the time when they had toddled about together in pinafores, and Richard had picked up Walter when he fell and hurt himself, those two had been devoted to each other, never had a cloud come between them, never had young Grenville spoken to the sickly delicate boy in the way he spoke to others—never until that Sunday morning when Lizzie on her way to Church passed through the garden, and saw Walter's retreating figure and heard Richard's angry words.

The boys had both been standing outside the old school house ; there was a great gap in the hedge as though it had been beaten down by some one jumping through it, and Dr. Graham, the master, had come out, and looked at it with consternation, and asked the lads if they knew anything about it.

"How should we?" answered Richard, the angry blood *mounting to his cheek.*

"That is not the way to speak to me, sir," said the Doctor. "I command you to be silent, and you, Hargrave, tell me the truth. You were all of you out here last evening; I heard your voices as I sat in my study; did any of you in defiance of my express command attempt to jump that hedge?"

Walter looked fearlessly into the master's face.

"If you please, sir, I had rather not answer that question."

The Doctor was generally supposed to be a lenient and most merciful preceptor, but it was rather a joke amongst the boys that he was off his head on the subject of that hedge. "Sir, I command you to speak," he thundered forth, and Walter in trembling tones said, "I believe Grenville and Halliday did try to clear it, sir, but I am sure they did not hurt it; the mischief has been done since, the hedge was all right when we went away last night, I am quite sure of that."

"Never mind whether they did it or not," was the angry answer; "my commands were disobeyed—I will see about this to-morrow," and he walked off, leaving the two boys standing looking at each other.

"I am very sorry, Richard," said poor Walter, "indeed, indeed, I tried not to answer, but you

know there was no help for it, it would have been all right if you had not spoken to him as you did at first."

"All right, would it? I tell you, Walter Hargrave, you're a sneak, and a coward, and a bully, and it's better you should know the truth at once."

He said a great deal more than this; he used expressions which it would not do to write here, and Walter turned away pale and trembling, with a sick feeling at his heart, a feeling that comes to us sometimes when something we have loved and prized very much, seems suddenly to have been wrenched from us; and then Lizzie appeared, only to hear the end of her brother's harangue, which was addressed to her for want of a better listener, and she did not know to whom those angry words alluded; but truth to tell, such demonstrations were of such common occurrence, that she did not seek to inquire into the particulars of the case; it was enough for her to know that Richard was in a rage with somebody. She felt very miserable that morning, poor little maiden; the very brightness of the May sunshine seemed to make things worse; the outer world was all so bright and gay, and glad, and *only man's* anger, and man's passion,

seemed to mar the beauty that came straight from GOD.

The words of the Vicar's sermon on that Rogation Sunday were taken from the Epistle, "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

"Oh, how I wish Richard were here," mused poor Lizzie, and Aunt Patty, who had come in for the Celebration, blew her nose vigorously and set herself to listen with more than usual attention to the good old man's words, they were very few and very simple.

"My dear people," he said, "this is called Rogation Sunday, and Rogation is taken from the Latin word *Rogare*, which means to ask. It is at the time of the year when the seeds of the earth are sprouting forth from the ground, and at Rogation-tide we ask that through the gentle rains and refreshing dews they may bring forth an abundant harvest; and the Church has ordered that these Rogation days should be days of Abstinence; we pause as it were just for a little time between the Easter joy, and the full bright glory of Ascension-tide, and pray with renewed earnestness, to the Giver of all good gifts. And while we ask that He will

have compassion upon us, and provide for our temporal needs by bringing to perfection the fruits of the earth, all the more earnestly ought we to entreat Him to grant us the grace of His Holy Spirit that we may think those things that be good—that is, that He may put good thoughts into our hearts, and that the good thoughts may result in good works ; for, my brethren, desire must come first, and then action follows—the thoughts in themselves are but the seeds sown into the ground, and if the seeds came to nought, where would our harvest be ? And so if our thoughts, the good thoughts which God gives us, do not bring forth good works, they are so to speak useless—ay, they are worse than useless, for we shall have to account for them before the Judgment Seat as talents given to us, which we wantonly flung away.

“ And how are we to *ask* God to bring these good thoughts to perfection ? the Gospel tells us how this is to be done : All that we ask the FATHER in the Name of His SON, He will grant us. Never mind *how* our prayers are answered, never mind if it does not seem to us as though God poured upon us all the blessings for which we have prayed, if *all* has been asked in the Holy Name of JESUS *all* must be right ; sorrow may

be our portion still, it was the portion of our dear LORD : ‘In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ And, my dear friends, there is one especial grace I want you to ask of God—the grace of holding your tongue—bridling your tongue ; depend upon it you all want it, depend upon it I want it ; half our misery in the world proceeds from sins of the tongue ; we are all of us so ready to answer, so anxious as it were to *assert ourselves*. To some the temptation may be greater than others, to *all* it is a temptation, and remember what the Apostle says, ‘If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.’

“Vain, useless, of no avail ; they are hard words but true ; for, my brethren, there was One Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, Who stood all silent before His persecutors, Who as a sheep before his shearers was dumb, and we must try to follow in His Sacred Footsteps, for if we do not, there is no hope for us.

“I want this to be your Rogation Prayer ; of course there are many other graces of which you each stand in need, you know your own weaknesses and shortcomings, and you must take

them to GOD, and lay the burden before Him, and ask Him in the Name of the SON to help you ; but I am sure we shall all be happier and better, and more CHRIST-like if we take as our special lesson the *necessity* of bridling our tongue."

Aunt Patty's handkerchief was in constant requisition during the Vicar's sermon ; she was thinking, poor old lady, of that conversation which she had had with him not so very long ago, which she had tried to put out of her mind, but which all came back now with redoubled force, and she could not help looking round to see what effect the words were having upon Richard ; but Richard was no where to be seen ; he was generally to be seen sitting with Walter Hargrave, but Walter was there alone, looking more than usually pale and ill.

And Lizzie during the solemn Service asked our Blessed LORD, Who was present then upon His Holy Altar, to teach her to be gentle and loving, and not to say hard words to any one—for she did say them sometimes ; there was a strong spice of the Grenville imperiousness in Richard's sister, and then she said a little prayer for Richard, and asked GOD to put good thoughts into her darling brother's mind. When she left the Church, and went out into the May sunshine,

she was happier than she had been as she walked there two hours before, thinking of Richard's harsh words spoken of somebody or other.

"Walter," she said, as young Hargrave joined her, and the two lagged behind Aunt Patty's Bath chair, "Walter, how pale you look, is anything the matter?"

"No, at least not much, only 'King Richard' is angry with me, and I don't think I can stand it," and then he told her the story which we already know.

"It will be all right soon, Walter, dear," said the girl, quietly; "you know Richard's way," but even as she spoke she remembered the words of the Vicar's text, the solemn words of the Holy Apostle S. James, and Richard's way had never appeared to her in so grave a light, as it did on that Rogation Sunday.

"Yes," answered Walter, sadly, "I know it is, but he never was so angry with me before, and somehow I don't seem able to bear things as I did before I had the fever in the winter."

"Poor Walter," and Lizzie looked at the pale face upon which a little tinge of colour had risen, and there came into her mind the thought of a poor girl to whom Aunt Patty used to send nice things the autumn before, and who had

died of consumption,—“Poor Walter, you will be better soon, when the summer has quite come.”

“Yes, I hope I shall ; but, Lizzie, will you see if Richard has come home ?”

Lizzie ran into the house to look for her brother, and came out with a grave troubled face.

“No,” she said ; “Jane says that he ran in an hour ago, and said he was going to spend the day with Frank Lennard at the Grange.”

Walter sighed : “Then he will not be home till late, I must wait until to-morrow.”

“Yes, and Walter dear, please don’t be unhappy, for indeed you know it is only Richard’s way.”

Lizzie did not altogether like the idea of her brother spending that Sunday at the Grange.

Frank Lennard was the last of his companions likely to pour oil upon the troubled waters ; he was a wilful ill-disciplined lad, and no friend of Walter’s, whom he always designated as an old muff.

All through that Sunday afternoon, Lizzie thought of Richard and of Walter ; the boys were almost equally dear to her, and this quarrel that had come between them was a real grief to her. *She knelt down* in her own little room,

and asked God to make Richard patient, and to lead him in the right way, for poor child, that morning had somehow shown her that Richard's way was not the right way.

It was very late when the boy came home from the Grange ; Lizzie had gone to bed, but she crept into her brother's room, and bent over him and kissed him as he lay in the light of the May moon, with a strange, determined expression upon his young face.

"Richard, dear Richard," she said, "I want to speak to you."

"Then I don't want to speak to you," was the surly answer ; "go to bed, child."

"But, Richard, poor Walter—"

Richard started up angrily : "Don't mention his name to me," he said, "I never want to hear it, or to speak to him again."

She saw it was of no use to argue with him, so she left him ; but again she knelt, and asked God to help them all—Richard, and Walter, and herself, for trouble seemed very near.

Monday came, Richard went off to school early, and at eleven o'clock, when Lizzie was doing her lessons with Aunt Patty he rushed into the room, and threw his books upon the table.

"There, I've done with those for ever ; thanks to that sneak Walter, I'm expelled and disgraced."

They could not understand him very clearly ; he was too angry and excited to be very coherent : but two hours later Dr. Graham called on Aunt Patty, and from him she heard the truth.

He had spoken very gently about the act of disobedience to the boys that morning, and Richard had quite forgotten himself, and had uttered words both to him (the Doctor) and to Walter Hargrave, in *his* presence, which could not be forgotten.

Aunt Patty cried bitterly, and kind Dr. Graham walked to the window and coughed, and stood first on one leg, then on the other, which was a way he had when he was agitated.

"It's Richard's way, Doctor," sobbed the poor old lady, "it has been all his life."

"Yes, I know it has, ma'am, it's just for that reason that I have been obliged to do what I have done, at the cost of more pain to myself than I care to talk about."

"O, Doctor, please take him back."

"I cannot, ma'am, it is not the first time, and it would not be the last, I am sure ; the boy needs *sterner discipline* than he can get here."

That evening it was settled between the Doctor and the Vicar and Aunt Patty, that Richard should go to London, to a distant cousin, who had offered to take him into his office, and he was to live with the Vicar's brother, an old lawyer, who would keep a tight hand over him.

The lad himself did not seem to care what happened. He felt the disgrace that had come upon him keenly, and he was glad that it was settled that he was to be off, at the end of the week ; "there was no use in dawdling about at home," he said.

They all felt it was better to leave him to himself, and to let the smart of pain do its work of cleansing. The Vicar was very kind to him, and so was Dr. Graham ; and poor old Aunt Patty and Lizzie prayed very earnestly during those Rogation Days for the boy they loved so well.

Richard would not see Walter Hargrave ; the lad had tried hard to have an interview with him, but he could not manage it, and poor Walter, crushed and broken down by this trouble which had come upon him from such small beginnings, and in which he was so entirely blameless, could only do as Aunt Patty and Lizzie did, and take his burden to God.

The evening of Ascension Day was Richard's

last evening in his old home. He had been to Church in the morning, (not to the early Celebration—he would not go to that,) and he had tried to forgive the wrong he *would* contend Walter had done him, but he did not *ask* from his heart that the good thoughts which God had put into his mind, might bring forth good effects. And when Lizzie went to him in the garden, as he was standing there watching the sun sink to his rest behind the distant hills, and tried to speak to him of his friend, he turned away from her impatiently, and bade her be silent.

But Lizzie was not to be daunted.

"Richard, darling," she said, "you remember Mary Watts?"

"The girl who died in the Green Lanes last autumn? Well, what of her?"

"Nothing; only I thought on Sunday that there was a look on Walter's face, just like there was on hers before she went away."

"What nonsense, Lizzie, why he's always looked thin and pale; girls *are* silly."

Lizzie had often heard the remark before, and had grown up in the belief that it was true, so she only laughed now, and said it was the girls' misfortune; and then she put her arm in Richard's, and the two paced up and down the

gravel walk, until Aunt Patty called them in, and sent them to bed.

I will not tell you about the parting the next morning. We all of us know what such partings are, and how brave we try to be, and how badly we succeed ; and how at last we go back to our every-day life, with a strange void in our hearts, looking back upon the days that have passed away, as treasures to be laid up in the storehouse of our memory, not to be opened again perhaps until we have journeyed to another country, where partings shall be no more.

One winter's evening, Aunt Patty and Lizzie were sitting alone, and there came a low timid knock at the door of the sitting-room.

"Come in," said Aunt Patty, in her cheery voice, and there appeared a small, pale, gentle-looking woman, with ever so sad a look in her grey eyes.

"Mrs. Hargrave !" exclaimed aunt and niece in a breath, "do sit down."

Mrs. Hargrave sat down, and tried to speak.

"How is Walter?" said Aunt Patty, "he has not been near us for months ; it was foolish of him to stay away."

"He did not like to come ; he thought you

in some way associated him with your trouble. He does not know—he never must know—that I came here this evening."

"Why, what is the matter?"

"Because, because,—oh, GOD, give me strength to say it,—because my boy is dying, and I cannot let him be troubled now."

"Dying!" and Aunt Patty laid her old shrivelled-up hand upon the mother's arm, and looked lovingly into her face.

"Yes, dying; the doctor said to-day that the end could not be far off, and I would not keep him back, he is ready to go, he has been ready, I think, ever since last winter when he had the fever, and they thought he would die then; and he is happy, he would be happy but for one thing,—he wants Richard to say he forgives him, he wants to see him again."

Aunt Patty got up and brought down her old-fashioned desk.

"I will write to him at once."

"Your writing will do no good, at least, I don't think it will, Walter has written twice; he thought if some one would go to London and tell Richard the truth,—somebody who had seen my boy, and knew that he was dying,—I thought the Vicar would have done it, that

there would have been no need to trouble you, but I called at the Vicarage on my way and heard that he had been obliged to go away upon business for two days. I dared not wait any longer, and so I came on here."

"I wish I could go myself," exclaimed Aunt Patty, "he should be here by to-morrow night if only I could take the journey to London."

Then Lizzie stood before her aunt and Walter's mother.

"Aunt Patty," she said, "I have been to London with you,—couldn't Jane go with me to-morrow, and I could bring Richard back? I could go and see Walter now."

"Yes, my dear, it will do very well." Aunt Patty could not say more, there was a terrible weight at her heart, a fear lest "Richard's way" was in part the cause of Walter's illness.

"Walter, dearest, I have brought you a visitor," said Mrs. Hargrave half-an-hour later, and Walter's face brightened when he saw who the visitor was.

"Lizzie, dear Lizzie, you have come to wish me good-bye."

"No, not to-day, dear Walter, I will come again to-morrow."

She had been warned that she must be very

calm, and she tried hard to be so, but she felt that her only safety was in silence; she had never seen Mary Watts look as Walter looked that night.

"I wish I might have seen Richard once more."

Lizzie did not tell him where she was going the next day; but she felt that when she told of that look on Walter's face, Richard must listen to her.

She went away, promising to be there again the next evening, and Walter smiled and said,

"It must not be later than to-morrow night, Lizzie."

Very early in the morning Jane and her young mistress were in the London express. Before ten o'clock the little sister stood in her brother's presence.

"Richard, I saw Walter last night, and he is dying; he wants to see you."

And Richard laid his head upon his hands, and said,

"I will come."

They reached Hanbury just in time. The Vicar had come home, and Walter had received his last Communion, and all thoughts of earth, even the *wish to see Richard again*, had gone

from his mind, and yet his face brightened, and the dim eyes had in them a new light when the door opened, and his friend and Lizzie stood near him.

"Walter, Walter, pray for me where you are going, ask for me that I may learn to bridle my tongue."

A smile of unearthly beauty was on the dying boy's face.

"Richard, I have loved you so much here, I couldn't forget to pray for you there," and Walter crossed his hands upon his breast and fell asleep.

One day, two years afterwards, there was a fuss in the office in which Richard Grenville was a clerk. Everybody was angry, everybody spoke; Richard only was silent. And when the storm was lulled, and the clerks discussed matters afterwards, they told of how Richard tried to make peace, and added, "It is Grenville's way, never was such a fellow."

Aunt Patty's and Lizzie's prayers, and Walter's early death, had indeed brought forth much fruit.

UPWARD SOARING.

Ascension Day.

“CHRIST, although we see Him not,
Still is with us here,
He, the Head, doth still abide
In His member dear ;
We in Him ascend above,
He indwells with us, by love !”

“HE bright glorious Festival of Ascension Day was a great day in the village of Areton, for besides being what it was, the day on which we celebrate the triumph of our blessed Lord, and sing our loud hosannas because His work on earth was done, and He had me up again to His Father’s Throne, to realms beyond the sky,”—it was the Dedication Feast of the beautiful Church of which all the villagers were so justly proud. From year’s

end to year's end the people looked forward to Ascension-tide as the brightest happiest time in all the year.

There was a Service to be held in the Church of the Ascension on the day when my story begins which had never been held there before. A children's guild had been formed, which was called the Guild of the Ascension, and on this joyous Festival its members were to be enrolled and to receive their medals, hung on to the bright blue ribbons.

"My dear children," said the Rector, "I am not going to preach you a long sermon, I am only going to say a few words to you upon what you are going to do to-day.

"I hope none of you think it is a little thing for indeed it is not; it is a very great thing, something which if it does not do you good, must do you harm.

"I do not say this to frighten you, my children, or make you think that you are undertaking some fearful responsibility by joining the Guild which we have formed. Believe me, it will be, it must be a great help to you, if you will only use it rightly. You have your rules, you know what they are, I need not go over them here; you know that you must be me-

and gentle to each other than you have been before ; that you must pray for each and be more regular at Church and at Communion, more careful in all things to the teaching of your LORD. And in your life you must try and be an example to , you must not be conceited or puffed up pride because you belong to this Guild ; but not think yourselves better than those o *not* belong to it ; but because from the act of your joining it, you seem to wish better, holier life than you have hitherto ou must be careful not to disgrace your s, you must try so to rule every word and that you do not cause scandal to fall upon yourselves or upon those who are ted with you by this new tie of brother-

u must seek to comfort each other in , to rejoice when joy comes to any of you, erry if one should be tempted or fall into pray that he or she may return to the of righteousness and holiness.

ie badge which you will wear bears upon it press of your SAVIOUR's Face, and the which you will read upon the medal are ecial teaching of Ascension Day,—' Grant

that we may in heart and mind with Him ascend.'

"‘Upward soaring,’ my children,—that is your lesson for to-day,—following the Footsteps of the Holy Child upon earth so that you may be fit to dwell with Him in Heaven.”

The Festival week was over ; the villagers had returned to their usual quiet every-day life ; and one evening towards the end of May, four children walked by the river’s bank, talking over all that had passed, and of all the grand doings that had taken place.

Two fine active boys were Harry and Martin Ward, whilst their companions, Jane Talbot and Minnie Grey, were always thought to be the wisest, brightest little maidens in all Waretown.

Martin was the leader of all fun, and sometimes it must be confessed of all mischief. Harry was a quiet thoughtful boy, and the Rector and the schoolmaster, and his own parents and brothers and sisters, thought that there was no one in the world like him, and that he could be trusted with anything.

And Harry thought this of himself, and there lay his great temptation. He never was scolded or punished like the other boys, and he began

to think that he deserved no punishment ; he did not know that deep down in his heart lay a deadly sin hidden from human eye, and that sin was the sin of pride and self-conceit.

On this very evening Martin was talking as he very often talked in a somewhat wild heedless fashion, and Harry was quietly rebuking him, and telling him that now he belonged to the Guild, he must try and be steadier and quieter, and not always thinking of fun and amusement.

The blue ribbons and bright silver medals hung round the necks of our four young friends, and as Harry spoke each looked down at the oving gentle Face of the SAVIOUR, and for a moment there was silence. Two of them were thinking of the Rector's words, and those two were Martin Ward and Minnie Grey, and Harry was priding himself upon always remembering what the Rector had said, and Jane Talbot's houghts were wandering far away to the Squire's little daughter who had likewise joined the Guild, and whom she had seen about half-an-hour before walking through the village in the " sweetest hat you could set eyes upon," and poor vain Jane, the eldest of the village carpenter's six little girls, was wondering how she could manage to

trim up her Sunday hat to make it look something like the young lady's.

"I don't think it's fair that she should have all she wants, and that we should have nothing," mused the silly child; "I don't see why she should be so happy, and walk about doing nothing all day, whilst I works and works until I'm so tired, and never gets nothing I wants in the end. Yes, I'll have a hat like that, see if I don't, and I'll wear it at the school feast!"

"Hullo, Jane," said the ever-lively Martin, whose silence was never of very long duration, "what's up now? you look mighty important, you do; I'll bet you're thinking of how you'll look best at the school feast."

Jane coloured crimson at being thus detected, and sharp words ensued, upon which Harry again interposed, and begged them to remember all they had promised only one short week before, and Martin went away feeling very angry, more angry with himself than with any one else, and the two girls walked off in an opposite direction, and Harry was left alone.

Before many minutes had elapsed, a sharp voice broke upon his ear,

"Hullo, parson," (the name was often applied to him in derision by some of the idle worthless

village lads,) "what are you doing there? I suppose now you've joined the Rector's fine new Guild, you're above saying a word to a fellow?"

"No, I am not, John," answered Harry, with an air of conscious superiority, as he looked benignly at the dirty unkempt lad who stood before him; "no, I am not, Jack, I always wish to be friends with you; I wish I could do you good."

A long low whistle was John Bullen's answer to this charitable speech. He was a sharp lad, with much that was good about him, but his home was a wretched one; his father and mother were both given to drink, and the boy led a wandering vagrant life, refusing to be taught, refusing to go to Church or to school, and yet sometimes longing to be different to what he was, longing to be like Martin Ward, his ideal of all perfection.

"Harry," he said at last, his dirty face lit up with a smile that was half sad, half mischievous; "Harry, if your brother Martin had said those words that you've just said, that he would be glad to do me good, I should have been right pleased to hear them, and thought there was some chance for me."

Harry smiled *good-naturedly*. "Martin must

be a different boy," he answered, "before he can do good to others."

Again came the long low mocking whistle.

"Look here, Harry Ward, you know I always speak my mind, and I'll speak it now. Martin don't try to do good, because he don't think he's good enough, and yet somehow he does manage to do it a little; I know some chaps as thinks a deal of him, because they know he wouldn't tell a lie, or do a thing that was really wrong, no not to save his life; and you, Harry, you think you're so good that you can be a help to any one, and yet somehow I don't see that you are."

The hot blood rushed to Harry's face, and his hand was clenched, and his lip quivered with rage, but his voice was quite calm as he answered,

"You may think as you like, Jack, only be sure that if the day comes when I can help you, I will willingly do it."

"Thank you for nothing," answered the incorrigible Jack, "and as I always like to be civil, I'll do as much for you, not because I love you, Harry, because I can't say as I do, but because" (and as Jack spoke his voice trembled, and a strange softened look was on his face,) "but because your mother was kind to my poor

little sister as is dead and gone, and because I love your brother Martin."

And Jack turned on his heel and walked quickly away, whilst Harry slowly paced the river's bank, and wondered what the strange unruly lad could mean.

The bright summer days passed quickly on, and Jane Talbot thought a great deal about that "sweetest hat" which somehow or other she must copy, and I am afraid her daily duties and her daily prayers suffered considerably in consequence of that ruling passion, vanity, which she allowed to gain the mastery over her.

Minnie Grey's heart was very sad as the month of June drew to a close, for her mother was dying, and the little gentle quiet girl tried not to think of herself, but tried only to please God, and to think of all the Rector had said.

At last July came, and with it the Wareton school feast.

Jane Talbot's new hat was ready for the occasion, but the girl's face wore a strange, unhappy, unquiet look, as the day approached when she had meant to astonish her schoolfellows by the grandeur of her personal appearance. For Jane had forgotten *all the promises she had made*, all

the good resolutions she had formed on that May day when she had knelt at the chancel steps, and received the badge of the Guild of the Holy Name. Temptation had come into her way, and she had yielded to it; she had attained her wishes, but oh, at what a cost.

One day her mother had laid a shilling upon the table, and gone out; when she came back it was gone. Shillings were very precious in that overcrowded home, but it never entered into the good woman's heart to suspect one of her children, her good honest children of whom she was so proud, of the theft. She searched in all imaginable holes and corners, and at last came to the conclusion that the shilling had rolled down between the cracks of the boards, and it was of no use "crying after spilt milk," only they must all eat a little bit less bread that week to make things come square.

Jane heard the words, and her heart smote her, but vanity was the poor child's besetting sin, and already she had bought the smart piece of blue ribbon which was to trim her shabby old hat, and she tried to stifle the warning voice of conscience, and to think how nice she should look, and how jealous she should make all the other children.

And when the morning dawned all clear and bright and sunny, and the school children were marshalled to Church, the Guild boys and girls taking the first place in the procession, no face was brighter, although no heart was heavier than Jane Talbot's.

Although the bells rang out so merrily now, only a few short hours before a solemn note had sounded from the old Church tower, and the passing bell had told that the soul of one of the Waretон people was winging its flight from earth to the unseen land, and calling upon the faithful to pray for it on its upward journey.

Minnie Grey's mother had gone to her rest on that day when all the Waretон children were looking forward to so much happiness, and the gentle little girl sat with her father in the darkened room, and listened to the sound of the joyous bells ; and she said with a smile,

“ Father, they're surely ringing out to welcome her home, for oh, she was so glad to go to her rest, although she was so sorry to leave you and me.”

“ My lass, I likes to hear you say that ; I was afraid it might make you all the more sad to think of your companions being so happy to-day.”

For answer Minnie held her medal firmly in her hand, and said,

"Oh, father, no ; when we joined the Guild the Rector said we must rejoice with others, and so I try to rejoice with them to-day, and father, dear, *she* said we must not sorrow for her, only be thankful that God had taken her from all the suffering ; and so we must not be sad, for I dare say some of the others, some of the Guild, I mean, are thinking of me through all their pleasure."

And the poor sorrowful man drew his only child towards him, and thanked God for having left him "his own little maid" to comfort him, and remind him of her mother, and then he went to lie down upon Minnie's bed, for he was completely worn out with the watching and nursing of the last few weeks ; and the little girl was left sitting in that quiet room alone with her dead, asking to be made what her mother would have wished her to be—a gentle, humble, lowly Christian maiden.

As she sat and mused upon her past life, that life which had been so glad and happy, and looked with something of fear and of wonder, but with simple child-like trust, to the yet untried path of the future, there was a low, timid

knock at the door, and Martin Ward, in his every-day clothes, appeared, in answer to Minnie's gentle permission to come in.

The boy looked shy and awkward enough; his honest face was all in a glow, as he stood first on one leg and then on the other, and tried to speak.

"Martin," said Minnie, "why are you not with the others at the feast?"

"Why you see, Minnie, somehow, I thought I'd rather not go to-day," and his glance fell upon the bed where all that was earthly of Minnie's mother lay in the calm sleep of death; "I thought, you see, that you were in trouble, and we had promised on that day when we joined the Guild, to weep with those that weep; and I thought may be I could run of an errand for you or for your father, and—and Minnie, I wouldn't go, and that's all."

"Oh, Martin, thank you; it is so good of you."

"No, no, don't say that, it's just to please myself I've done it; I couldn't have enjoyed myself to-day, thinking of your trouble. I'm just going home to my dinner, and then I'll come back and see what I can do for you."

And honest Martin disappeared as suddenly as he had arrived.

"There's no one like him," mused Minnie. "Harry is a better boy, I suppose, never in scrapes of any kind ; but oh, how mother loved Martin, and she was always right."

Another half-hour, and then another visitor appeared.

It was the Squire's young daughter, the little lady of whom poor Jane Talbot had been so envious. Very gently she approached the motherless girl.

"Minnie," she said, in her sweet gentle voice, "mother said I might come and bring you these flowers ; you will like to have them to put there."

"Oh, miss, you are very good."

"Don't say that, Minnie ; you know our sorrows must be one, and our joys too, because we promised that it should be so, when we were admitted into the Guild."

Surely the Guild was doing its work, teaching the honest working lad, and the little high born lady to weep with their little suffering sister.

Very reverently the two girls strewed those lovely white flowers over the bed, and then they knelt and each said a prayer, and when it was over Maude Warren's lips were pressed upon Minnie's cheek.

"Minnie, my own mother is very ill ; sometimes we think she will never be well again ; will you say a prayer for her and for me ?"

"Yes, miss, I will, every morning and every night."

Whilst Minnie kept watch by her dead mother's side, the school children were playing joyously in the fields, revelling in the glad summer unshine.

The Rector had spoken to them after dinner, and given them leave to wander off into the woods. "The only command I lay upon you," he said, "is not to go into Ashtown, nor upon the river. You all know I dare say that there is a circus at present exhibiting in Ashtown ; I am hoping it may come over to our large field before long, but to-day I beg you to be obedient to my commands, and I look to you, the boys and girls of the Guild, to show a good example to others.

"You, my children, have all been confirmed - you are all communicants ; it behoves you to be especially careful in all you do to-day, to bring no discredit upon the society which you have joined. It must be upward soaring with you always ; you must ever remember Ascension day, and the duties you then engaged to fulfil."

Merrily the children dispersed, merrily echoed the young voices through the green woods. We cannot follow them all in their joyous sports, we have only to do with two of the party, Harry Ward and Jane Talbot, who went off together for a walk in the shady copse ; Jane in her new hat and blue ribbons, looking it must be confessed extremely pretty.

On they went talking and laughing, and wondering where Martin could be. It was like his odd ways to absent himself at the last moment.

"No, I can't make it out a bit," said Harry ; "perhaps he got into a bad temper, and would not come."

Suddenly from behind a tree appeared Jack Bullen, and a group of rough unruly boys.

"You can't make it out, can't you, parson ?" said the former ; "then for once I knows better than you do, for I met Martin three hours agone, and he told me why he didn't come to the pleasureing to-day, and it was because he thought by stopping behind he might help them as is in trouble ; and there ain't another lad in Wareton, as would have done what he's done." And Jack ran off as fast as he could, laughing a mocking, derisive laugh, as he saw Harry draw himself up, with an air of would-be offended dignity.

The other boys remained behind.

"We are going to Ashtown," said one of them, "to the circus; will you come with us, Harry, and bring Miss Talbot?"

"*Miss Talbot*" looked entreatingly at Harry. The lad stood still, with a strange irresolute expression upon his fair face.

"Jane, what would the Rector say?"

"So that's it?" said one of the boys, "you're afraid of the parson; I shouldn't have thought it of you, Harry Ward."

To be afraid of anything or anybody was an accusation which Harry could not brook.

"No," he said, "I'm not afraid, but we must be in Thorpe's meadow at seven o'clock, or the vans will have started, and we shall lose our chance of getting home."

"Why, lad, it's but just three; the performance begins at four, and it's over at six. You can get back to Thorpe's meadow in half an hour."

Again Jane spoke.

"Please go, Harry, it would be so nice, and I'm sure the Rector wouldn't mind so long as we get back in time."

And Harry, trusting in his own strength, yielded to the temptation, and he and Jane

went on with those rude boys into Ashtown, whilst the bright blue ribbons hung all unheeded round their necks, and the loving Face on their Guild medals did not once catch their eye.

When they were seated in the circus, looking at all the wonderful performances, Harry's glance fell upon his badge, and he hid both ribbon and medal inside his jacket.

Oh, when we do such things as this—when we are ashamed of what has hitherto been a holy and a sacred thing to us, we have surely taken a very backward step in our Christian course.

Once more Harry and Jane stood in the cool evening air, out of the glare and heat of the stifling circus. The Church clock struck half-past six.

"We must walk quickly," said Harry; "I know a short cut through the fields."

The short cut proved to be a long round, and when the boy and girl reached Thorpe's meadow, the vans had all gone: not a trace of them was to be seen.

"Jane," said Harry, "how are we to get home? can you walk?"

"No," said Jane, with the tears in her blue eyes; "my feet are so tired I should only drag

you back, I can stay here all night under the trees ; oh please let me, Harry, and you go on ; don't let us both be punished."

"Punished," answered Harry, bitterly, "surely we are punished enough already ; we who belong to the Guild, to have set such an example."

Even then the thought of his sin was only second in his mind ; the impression left upon others by his wanton act of disobedience was uppermost in that proud self-satisfied heart.

"I cannot leave you," he said ; "we must face it and bear it together."

As they stood, still wavering and unsettled what to do, their rough companions came up to them.

"So the good children are left in the lurch," they said. "There's but one way of doing the ten miles ; the tide's in our favour, we'll take a boat, and pull you down easy enough."

It seemed something like another act of disobedience to go upon the water, and yet it was the only way of getting home ; and Harry ruefully remarked that things could not be worse than they already were.

They followed their guides to the boat, which was moored near the river's bank, and by which the lads had come up in the morning.

"Where's Jack?" said one of them.

"He's off home by the road," was the answer.
"He said perhaps he'd meet us at the ferry

"You'll mind when you come to the ferry,
won't you?" said Harry, anxiously.

"Never fear, parson; we'll have you home
safe by ten o'clock to-night."

It was eleven o'clock in quiet Waretown, yet there were lights in many a cottage window, and in two homes there was special sorrow and anxiety, for Harry Ward and Jane Talbot had not yet returned to the village.

Martin and his father, and James Talbot, some of the neighbours, had gone with the Rector to seek the truants, and it was on the grey dawn of the July morning, that a procession was seen approaching the village from the river. Strong men were carrying heavy burdens in their arms, gently and tenderly, but with awed, sorrowing faces.

"Please GOD, they may yet be well, two we've brought with us, Harry Ward and Jane Talbot, and all the other lads are safe. Jack Bullen saved these two, and there was much chance for him, poor fellow. We've got him at a cottage near where the accident

pened ; he's mortal bad, there ain't a doubt of that."

It appeared that a sudden squall had overumed the boat ; that the boys who had enticed Larry and Jane into it were good swimmers, id at once made for the land. The other two ust inevitably have perished had not honest ck Bullen at the risk of his own life saved eirs.

Only once had he spoken after he had been ugged out of the river, after bringing Harry i Jane safely to shore. "Ask Martin to pray me," he said, and then he closed his eyes, i all thought that the poor, dirty, neglected had breathed his last sigh.

Later in the day the Rector heard two consions. Harry Ward and Jane Talbot told i of their many sins, and placed in his hands 'ribbons and medals, which they knew they longer had any right to keep.

"We will put them by for you until nextension Day," said the good old Priest, with rs in his eyes ; "and in the meantime you st try harder than ever to ascend in heart and id whither your LORD has gone before, and member that our upward soaring must be step step, following JESUS in His sufferings, climb-

ing the ladder which is joined together by discipline, and penance, and self-denial."

Then words of pardon and of peace fell upon the ears of the boy and girl who had sinned so deeply, and whose sorrow was so true and real ; and although the months were months of suffering to them both, they knew that the suffering was GOD's own appointed discipline, by which He leads His erring children to His Home above the sky.

Jack, poor ignorant Jack, did not die ; month after month he lay upon the miserable bed in his wretched home, whither he had been removed a few days after the accident. And Harry and Jane went to thank him, but he did not want any thanks, he said, he only wanted Martin to teach him to be good ; and Martin came and spoke to him of all the love, and of all the mercy of JESUS, and made him promise to see the Rector, who called every day, but who had hitherto been refused admittance.

A change came over the poor fellow as he lay on his sick bed, and Martin and Minnie Grey spoke hopefully to each other, and their one great wish was that when Ascension Day came round again, Jack might be made a member of the Guild.

But they agreed that nothing must be said until after the Confirmation, which was to be some time in April.

When April came poor Jack could just crawl about on a pair of crutches, a shadow of his former self, a pale thin lad, with all the old impetuosity gone from him.

It was the eve of the Confirmation Day, and he waited for Harry Ward, as the latter walked home from school, and stood in his way.

"Harry, forgive me for having teased you in the old days, and please try and do me good now, for I sorely need it."

And Harry's voice was choked with sobs as he answered,

"Oh, Jack, Jack, it is I who ought to ask for forgiveness. I'll do what I can for you, old fellow, but you've got Martin and Minnie Grey, to say nothing of the Rector, and you cannot want me; and Jack," he added, in a lower tone, "after to-morrow and Sunday you'll have such help; think of me, there, Jack, pray for me ere."

And Jack opened his eyes to the widest extent, and said,

"I pray for *you*, Harry? surely you can't mean it?"

"Yes I do, Jack, mean it with all my heart."
And a long silent pressure of the hand sealed
the compact of full and free forgiveness.

Once again it was a bright May day, and the boys and girls of the Guild of the Ascension were assembled in the old village Church.

Harry Ward and Jane Talbot went up to the altar, and very pale, and half bright, half sad, but wholly thankful, were the two young faces, when the boy and girl returned to their seats, with the blue ribbons and medals round their necks, which they had forfeited ten months before.

There was another whose eyes were dim with tears, as led by Harry and Martin Ward, he too knelt in the Most Holy Place, and received the badge of brotherhood with those he now loved so truly, with whom he had been made one in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

"The Parson told me I must try to soar upwards," said poor Jack, as he walked home with his friends, "and we'll try to climb together and help each other, till we gets to the place where JESUS went on the first Ascension Day."

LEAVE US NOT COMFORT- LESS.

Sunday after Ascension Day.

“ But we are lingering here,
With grief and care oppress,
LORD, send Thy promised Comforter,
And lead us to our Rest.”

A LITTLE sorrowing band stood on the Mount of Olives on that Ascension Day more than eighteen hundred years ago, when the Blessed LORD having finished His work on earth, went back to His Heavenly Home to sit forever at the Right Hand of the FATHER in glory everlasting.

The Disciples had been with their Master during those forty days after His Resurrection, they had listened to His loving words, they had

looked upon His pierced Side, their love for Him had been deepened and intensified by a knowledge of what He had suffered for their sakes, and now they knew that they were to lose Him ; He was going to glory, and they were to be left struggling here, without His gracious Presence to cheer them on their path through life.

Wistfully and anxiously they gazed, seeking to penetrate the cloud that hid Him Whom they so loved, from their view, and then an angel appeared and told them that He would come again in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven.

They turned away, and went to Jerusalem sorrowing perhaps, that He, the Holy One Who had suffered for them, bled for them, died for them, should walk no more with them on earth but amid the sorrow hope was in their hearts even the promise of the Comforter, Whom He had promised to send to them, to abide with them for ever.

And during the ten days that followed they waited in Jerusalem for the promise to be fulfilled, waited for that yet greater blessing which they knew would come to them, because He had promised it, Whose Word never failed. Whose Promise was ever sure.

And those ten days between Ascension Day, and Whitsun Day, are called Expectation Days, it seems that such seasons come into the lives of all Christians, that there are times when the world looks very dark and dreary, when trouble has come upon us, when some dear one has been taken from us, and we know not where to turn for rest and comfort.

Know not? oh, surely not, for like balm ured into our wounded stricken hearts, come the words spoken to the disciples all those hundreds of years ago, spoken just as truly, just as fittingly to us now, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you," and so out of the trouble that GOD sends us comes a great and holy joy, the Blessed Spirit comes to us, to abide God's love within us, to make us feel that we are no longer *orphans* (such is the general rendering of the word translated "comfortless") but that we have a most loving, tender THER, an Elder Brother so gentle and compassionate that He feels for our every sorrow, bears the weight of our every burden.

Let us ask that we may not be left comfortless, but that the HOLY GHOST may comfort us here on earth, and take us to that same place whither our SAVIOUR CHRIST is gone before.

Such comfort, the comfort of the Heavenly Dove, came into the life of a little boy whose story I am going to tell you, and who was indeed steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, amidst the waves that surged over him in his onward course.

In an old castle on the banks of the noble river of which the Germans are so justly proud, the glorious, shining, sparkling Rhine, there lived a warlike baron, with his wife and his little boy. Heinrich was the child's name,—a fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxon lad, of whom his father was justly proud.

Far as the eye could reach, where trailing vines overshadowed the hills, and flowers bloomed in the sunny valleys, and cattle browsed in the fertile meads, all belonged to the Baron,—and to all this loveliness, and all his father's riches, little Heinrich was the heir.

It was a happy life enough that the boy led when the baron was at home, but yet there was ever a shadow upon his brave young spirit, even an unspoken hardly recognised feeling down deep in the tender little heart, that happiness was not meant for earth, that all the beauty upon which he gazed would soon pass away, wa:

but a type of that fair unchanging loveliness
which eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard.

"Why is it," the boy would say to himself,
that mother does not love me as father does?
Why is it that she who is so gentle and loving to
all around her, is so hard and cold to me?"

"Gretchen, why does she not love me?"
Leinrich one day said to his old nurse; and the
old woman clasped her darling in her arms, (she
loved him better than any one else in all the
world,) and answered,

"Have patience, my little one, she will love
you some day."

"Ah, yes, but some day is a long way off;
perhaps it will never come; Gretchen, tell me
truly, do you think she will love me in Hea-
ven?"

"All will be bright there, my treasure,—one
love will satisfy us there."

And with the good old nurse's words poor
Leinrich was obliged to be content, and yet the
longing, yearning feeling was always there.

Time passed on, the Baron Von Stolzenfels
was away from home, more than he had ever
been before, and the child was left to the care
of the servants, and to the teaching of the faith-
ful old *Gretchen*.

His mother he seldom saw ; he would watch for the beautiful lady, as day by day she walked on the broad terrace overhanging the glorious Rhine, and sometimes he thought that there was a sad look in her eyes, and he wished, oh, how he wished that he could bring a smile upon her grave troubled face.

Sometimes she noticed him, and said, "Good morning, Heinrich," and at other times a careless nod was the only sign of recognition she vouchsafed him.

Once he made a little wreath of forget-me-nots, and he gave it to her with burning cheeks, and drooping eyes, and she stooped and kissed him, and bade him be a good boy, and oh, how happy he felt for the remainder of the day.

But this was a very rare occasion, in the poor little lonely life ; often and often Heinrich went out into the woods, and sat amongst the beautiful wild flowers, and twined them into wreaths, and chaplets, whilst his tears fell fast, and he thought his heart must break, unless she, his own mother, would speak one loving word to him.

Then he would go home, and sob out all his grief to old Gretchen, and she would tell him tales of the sufferings of the Saints, of the lovely

lives dedicated to the service of GOD, of the love of all on earth given up for the love of JESUS.

"My darling, when you feel as you do sometimes," said the old nurse, one Sunday afternoon, it was the Sunday after Ascension Day, "think of Him Who loved you well enough to die for you, and Who sends His HOLY SPIRIT into your heart to comfort you in all your sorrows and troubles. Yes, Master Heinrich, the Comforter is always with you, always will be with you all through your life if only you do not drive Him away, by any fault or sin of yours. And even when we sin, He is with us ; that is, if we are sorry, if we do not refuse to listen to His gentle warning Voice when He speaks to us, and re-uses us for our shortcomings. And when the sadness comes into your heart, my dear, will you join your hands and make the holy sign and say, 'I beseech Thee leave me not comfortless, but send to me Thy HOLY GHOST to comfort me.'"

The boy did as he was bid, and when he felt the hot blood mounting to his cheek as day by day his mother passed him, and showed no sign of greeting, bestowed on him no glance of affection, he would bow his head, and make the

sign of the Cross, and say those few simple words, which nurse had told him to say.

And sometimes it seemed like the whisper of an Angel's voice, which said to him in softest, gentlest accents : " I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you."

One September day when the sun was shining brightly, and the glad river danced beneath its sparkling rays, and the vine-clad hills were decked with the gorgeous autumnal tints, which made them more lovely than ever, Heinrich was playing in the courtyard of the castle, when suddenly a messenger rode into the gates, looking pale and scared, and covered with mud and dust.

In an instant all knew that he was the bearer of evil tidings, all gathered round him, the boy standing amongst the servants, almost unheeded by them as they listened to the man's words.

The Baron Von Stolzenfels, the brave, the true, the noble, was dead,—sudden illness had attacked him, at the court of Berlin, and two hours had terminated the life which all men held so dear, but which God held dearer, and so took it unto Himself.

Heinrich uttered a long loud bitter cry, when by degrees the terrible truth dawned upon him,

that he should never again look upon his father's noble manly face, never again listen to his loving gentle words ; then he thought of his mother, and of what her grief must be,—old Gretchen had gone to her, the other servants were standing about, bewildered at their loss, (for they had all dearly loved the Baron,) and talking in hushed whispers about the future.

Heinrich was alone ; in the old avenue that led to the castle, there stood a stone cross, and he wandered thither and knelt down before it, and said, "Leave us not comfortless, send Thy ONLY GHOST to comfort mother and me."

Over and over again he spoke the words, and then he went into the house which seemed so dark and dreary amid the sunshine, and he found his way to his mother's room, and laid his pale hands upon her arm and said,

"Mother, I will take care of you, now that she has gone to the angels."

She roused herself from the stupor of grief into which she had fallen when the tidings of her loss were first brought to her, and she pushed back the curling hair from the boy's white brow, and looked into the blue eyes which were like his father's, and something of a strange new light came into poor little Heinrich's heart, even

amid all the sorrow for the father he had so dearly loved.

"Mother," he said, "I have asked God to send His HOLY GHOST to comfort us, and you know He will, for JESUS," and the boy bowed his head reverently, "promised that He would come to us."

But the momentary feeling of softness had gone out of the Baroness' proud spirit, she did not seem to heed her little son's words, and she turned to one of the servants who stood near and said,

"Send a messenger with all speed to Heidelberg, bid my son Claude de Léon come to me at once."

Heinrich did not understand what she meant; had he a brother of whom he had never heard? was this the reason why she did not love him? had she another son who held the place in her heart, that he knew had never been given to him?

"Mother," he said, "who is Claude?"

There was no answer; the Baroness lay back upon her couch, and turned her face to the wall, and Heinrich wandered away to seek old Gretchen, and to ask her what those strange mysterious words *could* mean.

The old woman tried to evade the question, but it was of no use, Heinrich would have an answer.

"Gretchen," he said, "I heard them say in the court yard that I was the master now; I don't want to be, indeed I don't, but there are some things which I have a right to know, and I *will* know this."

Gretchen looked into the little earnest face, upon which something of manliness seemed to have come in that last sad hour, and then she obeyed her little master's command.

"Claude de Léon is your mother's son by a former marriage," she said; "he has never been to the Castle yet; your father did not care that he should come."

"Then he shall not come now," was the passionate impetuous reply; "the Castle is mine; they said it was, and I say he shall not come, if my father, my own dear good kind father did not wish it," and poor Heinrich burst into a passionate flood of tears, whilst Gretchen held up her finger warningly, and looked towards the door.

But it was too late; the Baroness was at the boy's side; an expression of fierce ungoverned anger was on her beautiful face.

"Child, how dare you speak so ! who made you master here !" and she lifted her hand and pushed Heinrich away.

His little hand was clenched, a fierce light was in the blue eyes, an angry retort rose to his lips, but ere it was spoken, he had caught sight of a little crucifix which hung upon the wall, and above it was a picture of a pure holy, gentle Dove,—an emblem of the HOLY GHOST ; then Heinrich said his prayer, "Send Thy HOLY GHOST to help me, to be good and dutiful to my mother ;" he dared not speak, he only pressed his lips very tightly together, and the victory was won.

He went out of the room, and took his way to the sunny woods, and there amongst the flowers that told him of all God's love, he sat and poured forth all the grief and the anguish of his poor little heart, in a burst of passionate sobs.

That night Claude de Léon arrived at the Castle ; a fine handsome dashing young fellow, who took no notice whatever of Heinrich, and ordered the servants about, as though he were lord of all those vast lands.

The body of the Baron was brought to his

ancestral home, and laid in a vault beneath the *chapel* of the Castle, and Heinrich awed and subdued stood at his father's grave, and laid the wreath which he had made upon the coffin, and those who saw him marvelled at the strange, determined expression which had come within those last few days upon the fair childish face.

Long after every one else had gone away Heinrich knelt before the Holy Altar.

"I know it will be hard," he mused; "but I know that GOD will help me, I will be patient and bear with Claude de Léon, I know he hates me, he looks at me as if he did, but for my mother's sake, and because every day I ask God not to leave me comfortless, but to send the HOLY GHOST to comfort me, and because I know that the sweet Dove will not be with me if I allow any angry thoughts to be in my heart; I will be kind to him now, and I will do what I can for him, when I grow up to be a man."

And so in the strength of the LORD, and of His HOLY SPIRIT, the childish vow was taken; how it was kept, the sequel of this little story will show us.

Days, and weeks, and months rolled on, and Claude de Léon was still at the Castle, and Heinrich's life was more unhappy than it had

ever been, for his half brother was very cruel to him, laughing at him, and taunting him, on every possible occasion, sometimes striking the boy in his anger, when he thought no one was near to see him.

Poor Heinrich ! it was indeed a hard matter to keep his resolution ; once or twice he was tempted to return the cowardly blow, but he remembered the vow he had taken in the chapel, and very reverently and simply he made the holy sign, and thought of the gentle Dove, and the angry sinful feeling vanished away.

His mother noticed him now, even less than she had done in the old days ; Claude, her first-born son, was the joy and pride of her life, she seemed to have no thought but for him.

His father had been a penniless soldier ; the young man had nothing to live upon but a small income assigned to him, by the will of the Baron Von Stolzenfels ; and the widow's money was so tied up that she could not help him, as she would otherwise have done ; he had led a wild extravagant life, and it went to her heart to see his prospects blighted (by his own fault) and to think that none of young Heinrich's riches could be appropriated towards helping her darling.

hen there came a time of trouble to the
it sunny Rhine land, when sounds of war
heard from afar, and nobles and peasants
summoned to join the army of the
eign.

ude de Léon, thirsting for excitement,
and fearless as a young lion, was amongst
rst to hasten to the fight.

tore himself from the arms of his weeping
er, promising to take care as far as he could
e life which was so precious to her, and in
usage which led from her room he came
the little brother whom he had so cruelly
d during all those long months.

laude, Claude," said poor little Heinrich,
you not speak to me before you go? will
ot wish me good-bye?"

Claude passed quickly on, not heeding the
piteous entreaty, not thinking of him again
ome few minutes afterwards he saw the
ellow in the Avenue, standing before the
one cross gazing at it earnestly.

e will make a capital monk," said the
man to one of his companions; "the best
he can do is to retire into a Monastery,
ive up his lands to me."

i the laugh that succeeded the joke fell

upon the little Baron's ear, as he prayed the GOD of battles, to keep Claude safe from harm.

And Heinrich watched the young soldier out of sight, and wondered when they should meet again. Ah, when indeed?

It was summer-time when the war began, and the cold dreary winter had passed and gone, and budding spring had come, and the Church had told her children of the Easter joy, and of the full bright glory of Ascension-tide; and now was July, and the sun shone in its strength and still there seemed no hope that Claude would return to gladden his sorrowing mother's heart.

Sometimes Heinrich would venture to ask if there had been any tidings of his brother; but the answer he received was always cold and harsh, and the Baroness often told him that she knew he would be glad, if any harm befel Claude.

Once her heart was touched, once she stroked the fair hair almost lovingly, "Oh, mother Heinrich had said, "I pray for him every day that GOD may bring him back safely to you, I pray that the HOLY GHOST may comfort you now."

Many times afterwards she spoke unkindly

, but yet it seemed to Heinrich as though manner to him had somehow or other ged from that day.

; the summer waned away, and autumn ; grief and anxiety so weighed upon the ness's mind, that she became very very ill, hose about her shook their heads, and said if Claude did not return soon her sorrow i kill her.

en suddenly the news came that the young r had been dangerously wounded, and was oner in the hands of the enemy.

ne dared tell the Baroness the sad tidings, ie eye of affection discerned that there was thing wrong, and by degrees she heard the and then in her agony she sent for her boy, for Heinrich who had so longed for ove, and whom she had so neglected and sed.

leinrich, pray for him still," she said ; "such rs as yours must be heard; ask that my le, my darling, may not die, with all that t of unrepented sin upon his heart."

d the poor mother's head was bowed in anguish, as she thought of her first-born ying wounded, perhaps dying, in that dreary ray hospital prison.

"Yes, mother, I will pray," was all he said ; but there were other thoughts in the boy's mind which he dared not tell his mother.

From her presence he went to the vicarage of the Priest, a good earnest old man, who, only a few days before, had prepared him for his Confirmation and first Communion.

To him he told all that was in his heart ; the good old man smiled as he listened to the boy's words, and thought that surely it was a heaven-sent wish that had come to little Heinrich.

"Father," the boy had said, "they say that the prisoners are very badly treated ; some of them die of hunger and of thirst, and I want to help Claude, I want to help him now that he is in trouble."

The Priest's voice trembled as he answered, "They would not let you pass into the enemy's country, Heinrich ; there would be dangerous difficulties of which you can form no idea, what would you do then ?"

And the boy replied, "I would make the Sign, and ask God to send the Holy Ghost to me, and not to leave me comfortless, for Christ's sake. I am but a little boy, I think perhaps they would let me pass the

they know that I could not do them any
"

ut, Heinrich, my son, think of your mo-
she is so ill, she could not let you go from

smile so sweet, and yet so sad, that it
ed the good Priest's heart, was on the boy's
; he answered,

see her so seldom, she would not miss me.
ather, say that I may go."

as but two days' journey to the place where
ttle had been fought, and the Priest said
urds that to have thwarted Heinrich's wish
have been like keeping an Angel back from
nd of mercy, so he laid his hand upon
ld's head and blessed him, and gave him
nstructions about the route he was to take,
e went back with him to the castle and
tischen of his purpose, and although the
man cried bitterly at the thought of part-
h her darling—she had something of the
which the Priest had had—she could not
ie boy back from Angels' work. So Hein-
ft the Castle one October morning to seek
ude in the enemy's country.

was easy enough until he reached the fron-
r he had *money* with him, and a servant

accompanied him so far on his journey, then the boy went on alone (for the servant would have taken away his chance of accomplishing his purpose) and rude sentinels asked him his business, and some tried to turn him back, but he pleaded so earnestly to be allowed to go on, and told them that his mother was dying and his brother in prison, that the hearts of the rough soldiers were touched, and they shrugged their shoulders, and said he could not be a spy, he might go on if he liked. On he went, in the strength of his noble purpose, feeling very sad sometimes, and always asking not to be left comfortless, and the Holy Dove surely spread His soft white wings around the boy, and kept him safe. He came at last to the plain on which Claude had been taken prisoner. They were ghastly sights that met his eye, telling their own sad tale of the havoc that had been caused, by the sword, and the fire of the combatants.

There were soldiers on the field still, seeking for their dead, and to them Heinrich spoke, and by them he was directed to the hospital prison where the wounded lay.

None opposed his entrance, all were too busy with their own concerns to heed him, and even had they done so they would hardly have turned

him back, for, as he had said, he was but a little boy of only eleven years old, and he could not do them any harm.

He passed between the rows of mattresses where the wounded lay, bruised, mutilated, dying; he heard groans of agony, he saw sights of horror, and from the childish lips rose the oft-repeated prayer, "leave them not comfortless."

He had with him a flask containing some wine; he stopped and offered it to one poor fellow, who was crying out for water wherewith to moisten his parched lips.

As he knelt by the soldier's side he heard a voice he knew too well, swearing and raving in all the delirium of fever. In an instant he was at Claude's side, speaking to him, in his soft low voice, of his mother.

The wretched youth did not seem to hear the soothing words, and Heinrich got some water, and laid it on his burning brow, and poured some wine down his throat, and then he knelt and prayed that God would make his brother well.

That night a strange sight was seen by the doctor, as he went his rounds; a dark head with its bloody bandages, was pillowled upon the

head of a fair young boy, and the soldier and the child both slept soundly.

"I think he will do now," mused the doctor, as he watched his patient's regular breathing; "he has picked up a strange nurse, a more angelic-looking one, than we often come across."

Three days afterwards Claude recognized his little brother as he sat and watched him with loving tender eyes.

"Heinrich, Heinrich," he cried, "have you come to reproach me, with all my unkindness to you?"

"Claude, dear Claude, I came to find you and to try to help you."

For answer there was a groan of bitter anguish.

"Oh, boy, surely you hate me; tell the truth, Heinrich;" and there was something of the old fierceness in Claude's manner; "say you hate me, you cannot do otherwise."

And honest truthful Heinrich said, "I was very wicked once, I did nearly hate you, Claude, but I thought of JESUS, and of the Holy Dove, and then I learned to love you."

Claude did not speak for many minutes, and then he raised his face, and drew his little bro-

ther towards him, and Heinrich saw the big tears rolling down his hollow cheeks.

And the little boy prayed that God would not leave Claude comfortless.

By the evening of the next day, Heinrich was at the Castle again, standing in his mother's room, the bearer of a few almost illegible lines which Claude had scrawled.

"Mother," said the fresh boyish voice, "I have been to see Claude; he is better, and he has sent you this letter."

The Baroness took it eagerly; even then, there was no thought for her noble brave little son.

"Mother," so ran the letter, "Heinrich has saved my life. Ask God to forgive me; and let us both love him, whom we have so sorely injured."

"Heinrich, my little Heinrich, God bless and reward you;" and for the first time in all his life Heinrich lay in his mother's arms, and her kisses fell fast upon his face. He did not speak, his heart was too full for words; was it possible that after all those weary years of waiting he was loved at last, as he had longed to be loved?

My story is nearly told; peace was soon proclaimed, and Claude returned to the Castle, a

penitent chastened man, broken in health, all the old fierce temper a thing of the past, all the pride of his early days offered as a sacrifice for the sins of his wasted life.

The brightness of youth had gone from him, but there was a ray of earthly sunshine even for him in his deep love for his little brother Heinrich.

And Heinrich's own life now is one of glad uninterrupted sunshine ; he roams during his leisure hours amongst the vine-clad hills of his own inheritance, and he is thankful that the father whom he so loved is at rest from the world's weariness, thankful too for the earthly love which is lavished upon him by his brother, and mother, and old Gretchen ; and yet sometimes the sorrows of his early years come before him, and he knows that troubles may again come into his life ; he knows too how they can be cured ; and now in his happiness he prays the prayer that Gretchen taught him on that Sunday after Ascension Day, ever so long ago ; and he knows that he will never be left comfortless.

THE KING AND THE PAGE.

Whitsun Day.

"HOLY GHOST, come down upon Thy children,
Give us grace, and make us Thine ;
Thy tender fires within us kindle,
Blessed Spirit ! Dove Divine."

LONG years ago, as far back as the seventh century, there was a Saxon prince reigning in that part of England which we now call Northumberland, whose name was Ella. This king had a little son who was named Edwin, and when the boy was a very tiny child his father died, and Ethelfrith, the fierce king of Bernicia, came and conquered Ella's kingdom, and tried to kill little Edwin.

But his faithful servants took him away first to one place, and then to another, asking shelter for their master's son. But they were always in

fear lest he might be seized upon by his enemies and killed, for Ethelfrith was a very powerful prince, and none of the other kings liked to do anything of which he might disapprove.

At last (we are now quoting the words of the great historian S. Bede) those people of Northumberland came with their young prince to the court of Rædwald, the king of the East Angles.

They had told Edwin what to say, so he stood up bravely before Rædwald, and spoke thus :

“O king, I am Edwin of Deira,” (Deira was the name of that particular part of Northumberland over which Ella had reigned,) “and Ethelfrith, my father’s foe, hath seized my father’s kingdom, and seeketh my life. Let me, I pray thee, dwell in thy land, and deliver me not over into the hand of mine enemy.”

Then Rædwald had pity upon the fair, beautiful boy, and said,

“Thou mayest dwell in my land, and no man shall hurt thee, or give thee over into the hand of Ethelfrith.”

Then Ethelfrith heard that young Edwin was dwelling in peace in the land of the East Angles, so he sent messengers to Rædwald, saying, “Slay me Edwin mine enemy, and I will give thee much gold and silver.”

Rædwald would not listen to this treacherous proposal, and the answer he sent back to Ethelfrith was, "I will not slay him that hath shelter in my land, and dwelleth at peace in my house."

Ethelfrith was determined to gain his end again he sent his messengers with bribes than before, and again Rædwald refused to give up the young prince.

A third time he tried, saying, "Slay me Edwin, and I will give thee such gifts as thou hast never seen nor heard of; but if thou wilt not slay him, deliver him into my hand, then will I fight against thee, and smite thee and thy people in a great slaughter."

Rædwald was very much afraid, for he knew that the Northumbrians were a very mighty race, much stronger and more powerful than the Angles, and so he said to himself, "If Ethelfrith comes against me to battle, I shall not be able to stand before him." So he bade his messengers stay in his house, and said to them, "Tarry awhile, and I will either slay him, or I will deliver him into your hand."

When Edwin had a friend who heard what Rædwald had said to Ethelfrith's messengers, so late at night he went to the young prince's room

and said, “Come out of the house;” and Edwin followed him, and his friend told him what he knew, and he begged him to come with him out of the land of the East Angles, and to hide from Rædwald and from Ethelfrith.

But Edwin answered : “I thank thee well for thy goodwill, but I cannot follow thee. I have sworn to Rædwald that I will dwell in his land, and I may not go back from what I have spoken, while he hath done me no harm, nor hath wrought anything unfriendly against me. Nay, rather, if I must die, let me die by the hand of Rædwald, and not by the hand of a meaner man. For whither shall I fly, who have so long fled through all the kingdoms of Britain, seeking where I may dwell safely, and may escape out of the hand of them that seek my life?”

In vain his friend tried to shake his determination. Edwin was not to be persuaded, and at last the other left him ; and the young prince sat alone on a stone before the house, and his heart was very sorrowful, for he felt friendless and alone. He could not do as we can do when God sends us trouble : he knew no God to Whom to pray, and ask to be delivered out of the hands of his enemies, for those poor Saxons only worshipped Woden and Thor, and the

false gods of their fathers, and in their griefs and sorrows there was no one to whom they could turn for comfort.

So Edwin sat and wept before the house, and the only person near him was a little Saxon boy named Oswald, who was the son of one of the Northumbrians who had brought Edwin to the court of Rædwald, and who had died there, and who had heard the prince leave his room, and had followed him out into the darkness of the night.

The child went up to his young master and said, "Sire, why dost thou weep?"

And Edwin answered, "Because Rædwald seeks my life."

Then little Oswald cried bitterly, for he dearly loved the young prince, but he could not help him now in his great distress.

"Come with me, and let me hide thee in the woods; let us climb up the trees, and the leaves will cover us as they do the little squirrels."

And Edwin smiled sadly at the boy's suggestion and shook his head, and told Oswald to run away, for there was nothing left for him but to die.

Sorrowfully enough little Oswald went away, determined to wait and see what should happen

next. He took up his stand behind a tree, and there he stood watching Edwin, who sat on, on the hard stone, whilst the pale light of the moon, and of the clear silvery stars, shone upon his golden hair.

Then Oswald saw a man appear and stand before the prince. He was unlike any one whom the boy had ever seen ; his face had a strange light in it, and his raiment was coarse, and round his waist was a girdle, and from the girdle hung a cross of wood. His voice too when he spoke to Edwin was strangely sweet.

“ Wherefore,” said he, “ dost thou, while other men sleep, sit thus alone and sad on a stone before the house ? ”

And Edwin answered, “ What is that to thee, whether I abide this night within or without the house ? ”

Then the strange man said, “ Think not that I know thee not who thou art, and why thou art sad, and sleepest not, and why thou sittest thus alone before the house, for truly I know thee well what thou art, and wherefore thou art sad ; and I know what evils they are that thou fearest lest they should come upon thee. But tell me, what reward wilt thou give unto him who shall free thee from all thy sorrows, and

shall persuade Rædwald so that he shall neither do thee any harm, nor deliver thee into the hands of them that seek thy life?"

Then Edwin answered and said, "All that I have will I give as a reward to him who shall do his thing for me."

And the strange man said, "And what wilt thou do if a man shall promise thee of a truth that thou shalt slay thine enemies, and reign in their stead, and be a mightier king than any of thy forefathers, yea, or any of the kings that ever have reigned over the people of the English?"

And Edwin answered, "Yea, verily, if a man shall do this thing unto me, I will give him such a reward as shall be fitting for his good deeds."

Then the strange man spoke again the third time and said, "Yea, and when this thing hath come to pass, and when thou sittest upon thy father's throne, and art mightier than all the kings that have gone before thee, what wilt thou do, if he that promised thee all these things shall tell thee of a new law, better than any that thou or thy fathers have ever known? Wilt thou then believe him, and obey him, and do such things as he shall speak unto thee for thy good?"

And Edwin replied, "Yea, verily, if such a

man shall deliver me out of my sorrows, and set me upon my father's throne, I will believe him and obey him in all things whatsoever he shall say unto me."

Then the strange man laid his hand on Edwin's golden head and said, "When this sign shall come unto thee, remember this night, and remember thine own words, and delay not to do that which thou hast promised."

And when he had thus spoken he vanished out of Edwin's sight, and the youth saw him no more. But he was very frightened at the strange vision, and said to himself, "This is not a man, but rather one of the great gods, or one of the kind elves, that hath spoken with me."

Still the young prince sat alone before the house, looking at the moon and the stars, and wondering who his visitor could be, and little Oswald did not move from his station behind the tree, for the boy felt in his heart that some good had come to his young master, although he did not know what it was.

He did not dare to speak to him or to let him know that he was there, and so the two watched on through the silent hours of the night, and at last morning dawned, and the bright sun shone in the cloudless sky, and then the same

fiend who had begged Edwin to fly for his life, came out of the house with a glad smile upon his face, and said,

“Rise up, and come into the house with me, for the king’s heart is changed, and he will do thee no harm, but will keep his promise, and defend thee against thine enemies.

“I heard Rædwald telling his wife that he greatly feared Ethelfrith, and was going to give thee up to him; and the queen answered and said, ‘Sell not, O king, for gold, thy friend that is in trouble, and do not for the sake of wealth lose thine honour, which is of more price than all jewels.’”

Little Oswald heard the words, and his heart leaped for joy, for he loved Edwin his young master better than anything else in all the wide world; in fact, poor child, he had no one else to love, for his mother had died long years before, and his father lay beneath the shelter of an old oak tree in that strange land.

“It was the old man that did it all,” he mused; “I saw in his face that he was good and gracious, and meant to do some great thing for my young master. Oh, if I could but see him again, I should fall on my knees and thank him, and tell him how much I owe him.”

Of course Ethelfrith was very angry when he found that the king of the East Angles had broken his promise, and that he would not deliver Edwin into his hands.

So he marched with his vast army to the banks of the river Idle, by the northern border of the land of the Mercians, and there he gave battle to Rædwald, whose forces were much fewer in number than his. But Rædwald won the victory, and Ethelfrith and his son were slain.

Little Oswald went to the fight as young Edwin's page. It was the proudest and happiest day of the boy's life when the Prince called him to him and said, "Oswald, thou hast always served me faithfully, dost thou think thou canst be faithful and true in the hour of danger?"

And for answer, Oswald threw back his head proudly and said, "I have only lived for thee ever since my father died, my lord, and now I will die for thee, if need be."

The victory was hardly won ; young Edwin and his little page were in the thick of the fight. Once one of Ethelfrith's soldiers drew his dagger, and aimed it straight at the king's heart ; but Oswald threw himself before his master, and received the thrust which was meant for him.

Faint and bleeding the brave boy fell to the ground, and was trodden almost to death by friend and foe.

They found him when the fight was over upon the bloody field, and they lifted him up and carried him to King Edwin's tent, and dressed his wounds, and nursed him tenderly. They all thought he would die, but soon he got better, and although he was sorely maimed and crippled all the dangerous symptoms passed away.

When Edwin went to take possession of his own kingdom the little page rode on a white pony by his side, pale and thin, and wan, but with ever so glad a smile upon his young face.

"My lord," he said, "dost thou think the old man knows, dost thou think he will come again and require from thee the promise thou madest him, when thou wast sitting on the stone before Rædwald's house?"

"What promise, what old man, child, what dost thou mean?" said Edwin, somewhat angrily.Flushed and excited with success, he had done what a great many of us do every day of our lives,—forget the good resolutions, even the promises we made to God in the days when the bitterness of some great sorrow was weighing us down.

"I mean the old man who asked thee what thou wouldest do if he came to thee and gave thee a new law after thou shouldest have come back to the kingdom."

"He will never come," answered the young king; "he was some old beggar who had found out my story, and sought to gain money."

"I doubt that he was that," replied the boy, "there was that upon his face which I never saw upon the face of man before."

Often and often in the days that followed Oswald thought of those kind loving words which had in them a meaning which he could not fathom.

Time passed on, and the boy's life in the Northumbrian court was hardly as joyous as it had been in the land of the East Angles; for then he could run about, and engage in all manly sports, and amuse himself as he pleased; and he was always with Edwin, almost his sole friend and companion. Now he lay all day upon a couch in the king's palace, or was carried out to the green sward, so that he might sit under the trees and breathe the fresh pure air of heaven; sometimes, but only very rarely, he was lifted on his pony, whilst a servant led it, so that it might not go too fast, and then the

exercise would be bad for him ; for poor Oswald had never got over those injuries he had received in the battle, indeed time only seemed to increase the evil, and the days were very long now, and the pain was hard to bear, and there was no one to tell the little page of One Who bore so much for us, that He made all pain easy, all burdens light.

King Edwin often sat by the side of Oswald's couch, but he had a great deal to do now, he wanted to rule his subjects wisely and justly, and he was always thinking of how he could do this best ; so when he went to see his little page it was only for a very few minutes, and those few minutes were the brightest spots in the boy's life of pain.

The people of the kingdom of Kent were Christians, and Eadbald the king had a beautiful sister whose name was Ethelburga. Edwin wanted to make the Kentish Princess his wife, but Eadbald would not sanction the marriage, for Edwin was a heathen, who did not know the law of GOD.

But Edwin sent messengers to the Christian king saying, " Give me thy sister to wife, and I will not constrain her, but she shall worship

what GOD she will, and she shall bring with her if she will servants of her GOD. I will even believe as ye believe."

Oswald lying on his couch heard the wonderful news, and there came a hope into the boy's mind that these Christians might somehow or other soothe his pain.

He thought only of his body, poor boy; he little knew the great good gift of healing that they would bring to his yearning, longing soul.

"My lord," he said, as one bright summer's evening he sat upon the green sward, whilst Edwin eager and happy stood by his side, "my lord, dost thou think that the old man who spoke to thee on that night before the door of Rædwald's house, was one of these Christians?"

"I know not," answered Edwin; "but boy, if these Christians are what they pretend to be, perhaps we may learn to believe the things that they say make them happy."

"I would fain be happy," mused Oswald, as the king walked away, "but I do not suppose I ever shall be, for health is the only happiness, and that they all say can never come to me again."

The beautiful Ethelburga came to her new home, bringing with her a train of attendants,

and amongst them was a holy Priest named Paulinus, who acted as her chaplain. Sometimes the good man would pause in his walk up and down the green sward to look at the pale boy lying beneath the trees, evidently suffering so grievously. And Oswald thought that he had seen that gentle face before, but he could not remember where. Was it in his dreams, or was it in the far away land of the East Angles, when he was so happy and merry and active?

He wished, oh how he wished that the Priest would speak to him, but Paulinus had determined not at once to try and make converts at the court of Edwin, for the king in spite of his promises to Eadbald was still a heathen, and the holy man judged it better to *show* what the life of Christians should be before he tried to win souls to CHRIST.

Very loving and gentle was Queen Ethelburga to those about her; those fierce men of the North could not understand what it was that made her so patient and forbearing, so anxious for peace, so averse to strife of all kinds.

They did not know, poor things, that the Master she served so faithfully, and Who had laid down His life for her and for them, had

left her an example that she should follow in His most blessed Footsteps.

One day as Ethelburga walked along one of the long passages of the castle, she heard groans proceeding from a room which overlooked the keep ; she knew it was occupied by the page, who Edwin had once told her had saved his life, and she opened the door gently and found the boy lying there writhing in agony.

She laid her hand upon his head tenderly.

"God help thee, poor Oswald," she said.

He knew it was the queen who was speaking to him, but he was suffering far too terribly to stand upon ceremony.

"Oh, if some one could help me," he exclaimed ; "lady, if the God Whom thou servest can take away this pain, send Him to me."

"Oswald, pray to Him and He will either take it away or help thee to bear it."

"I do not know how,—wilt thou teach me?"

She drew a little Crucifix from within the folds of her dress, and held it before him, and she knelt down and said some words which he did not understand, but somehow or another the pain got better as he looked at the beautiful face of the Princess, and wondered whether it was because she was a Christian that there

was a smile of such infinite peace upon her face.

She sat with him for a long time, and then she went straight to her husband, and craved a boon of him.

“Paulinus has not tried to talk to any of thy people,” she said, “he judged it better not; but I would ask thy gracious permission to send him to Oswald thy page.”

Edwin could not find it in his heart to refuse his gentle wife anything, so he bade her go and send the Priest to the youth.

“Where have I seen thee before?” asked young Oswald of the holy man; “wast thou ever in the land of the Angles?”

“Yes, I have been there.”

“And didst thou come one night in the moonlight, and comfort Edwin the King as he sat weeping before the door of Rædwald’s house?”

“I did,” answered Paulinus, “but he knows not yet that I was his strange visitor that night; I am biding my time, and then I will ask him to fulfil his promise, and to bow to a King more powerful even than he is, to a law given by a perfect Law-Giver.”

Then a strange new joy came into Oswald’s

life, for day after day Paulinus sat with him and instructed him in all the great and holy truths of the Christian religion.

It was during Passion-tide that Oswald first began to hear of the things that belonged to his peace, and when Easter came a little Princess was born to Edwin and Ethelburga.

The night before this joyful event happened, as the king was sitting at supper, a messenger from the king of the West Saxons desired to speak with him, and whilst he was listening to him, the man tried to stab him with a poisoned dagger. Again one of Edwin's servants saved his life,—his thane or chief noble threw himself before the king and was killed.

Edwin gave thanks to his false gods for the mercy that had spared him, and for the goodness that had given him a little daughter ; and Paulinus bade him praise the God of Heaven and earth, Who only could give and take life, Who only could guide and govern and protect His servants.

And then Edwin gave Paulinus leave to baptise his child at Whitsun-tide. And he added,

“ I am going forth to battle against the king of the West Saxons, who hath sought to slay

me by craft ; if I return in peace, then will I believe in thy GOD and worship Him."

There was another who was to receive the great gift of the HOLY SPIRIT on that Whitsun Day. The little unconscious baby was to be made strong to fight the battle of life, and the young page Oswald was to be made strong also, —strong to meet his death, to bear the suffering that must be greater, as the end drew near.

He knew now where to look for comfort, where alone to find true peace ; he had learned to ask for the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT, the special gift and blessing of Whitsun-tide. He loved to hear of that Day of Pentecost when the HOLY GHOST came from Heaven with a rushing mighty sound to abide in the Church for ever.

Very humbly he tried to prepare himself for that Baptismal Day, when by the washing of Regeneration he should be made one with JESUS, one with Him in suffering, one with Him, he earnestly prayed, in patient submission to the Will of His Heavenly FATHER.

"It will be easier for me to bear the pain when I have the help," he said to Paulinus, "will it not? for then the HOLY GHOST will be with me to teach me patience."

"Yes, my son, thou wilt be blessed indeed when thou hast been made His own child."

"I have a wish, I would know if it be wrong, but I have loved the king all through my life better than my life, I think, and it would make me happy to see him a Christian before I die."

"My son, it will be as GOD wills, and thou mayest be sure that whate'er He wills is best; but earthly wishes must be with us to the end, and thou mayest pray that He will grant thee thy heart's desire."

Whitsun Day came. King Edwin was away at the wars fighting his enemy the king of the West Saxons, and in the little Chapel of the castle where Ethelburga and her attendants were wont to worship and adore their LORD upon His holy Altar, that double Baptism took place.

They called the little princess, Eanfleda, and in after days, she became a holy saint of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Yes, in the strength given her in that most Holy Sacrament, renewed in Confirmation, and sustained unto eternal life by the Body and Blood of her LORD, the royal maiden lived in those troubled times of the Church and brought forth the fruits of the Spirit.

And clad in the white robe of a catechumen,
his boyish delicate face flushed with pleasure,
he purest most holy pleasure he had ever
known, Oswald the page was carried into the
chapel, and the cleansing waters were poured
upon his brow, and in the Name of the FATHER,
and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, he was
baptised, made GOD's own for ever.

"Oh, it is such joy," he said to the queen
that night; "I had felt before that JESUS was
with me, feeling for me, loving me, watching
over me, now I feel that He is *in* me, and that
the struggle cannot now be very hard because of
all the help."

King Edwin won a great many battles, and
lew the king of the West Saxons, but again he
brought back from his promise, and although he
would no longer worship his false gods, he would
not be baptised nor confess himself a Christian.

Oswald still lived; no longer able to ride
even a very little distance upon his pony, no
longer able to be carried out into the sunshine,
or to watch the course of the winding river, from
the window of his little room.

He could hardly move hand nor foot now,
and yet no groan ever escaped his lips, no word

of repining ever fell upon the ear of his attendants.

"He was a good youth always," they would say to each other, "but a great change has come over him since that Whitsun Day when he was baptised,"—and some of those heathen servants of King Edwin's learned to love the God of the Christians because of Oswald's patience and gentleness.

"My son," said Paulinus, "the time has now come when I shall require Edwin's promise, at his hands."

And Oswald joined his thin hands in prayer, and asked God to help the king to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Then Paulinus went out, and came to Edwin, and he went up to him and put his hand upon his head and said, "Knowest thou this sign?"

And the king trembled, and fell at the feet of the priest, and Paulinus stretched forth his hand and lifted him, and said,

"Be of good cheer, Edwin, the **LORD** Whom I serve hath delivered thee out of the hand of the enemies whom thou didst fear, and He hath given thee the kingdom which thou didst desire. Defer not then to do the thing which thou didst promise."

Then Edwin knew that it was the same who spoke to him that night when he was so fearful, and so unhappy, and he believed and caused Paulinus to preach the Gospel to his thanes and nobles, and he himself said that henceforth he would only worship the God of Paulinus.

Easter came, and the king and many of his household and his subjects were baptised ; and when the solemn service was over Edwin found his way to Oswald's room.

It was a touching sight to see the monarch kneeling by the side of the page, and thanking him for all he had done for him all through his life, especially for the bright example he had set during the last few months.

And Oswald could only answer, "Oh, my lord, it is but little I have done, and it was not me, but the Grace of God which came to me on Whitsun Day."

"And the same Grace has come to me to-day, Oswald ; wilt thou ask for me that I may be faithful to my Baptismal Vows ?"

"My lord, I will pray, pray to the end."

Once more it was a bright Whitsun Day, and contrary to all expectation Oswald lived still. A holy Bishop had come to King Edwin's

castle, and the sacramental rite of Confirmation was held in the stillness of the early morning in the little chapel. The king and the page received the sevenfold gifts of grace together ; for they had carried Oswald into the chapel, and laid him before the Altar, and then when holy hands had been laid upon their heads, a yet more solemn hour was spent in the House of GOD, and the greatest blessing life can give came to the noble monarch, and the dying boy, in the most Blessed Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood.

Before the sun went down behind the distant hills on that glorious Festival of the HOLY GHOST, Oswald the Page, the faithful servant, went to pray for the master he loved so well in that land so far away, and yet so very near, where surely those who are gone know our needs, with clearer, more distinct perception, than they knew them here.

THE LITTLE SHOEBLACK.

Mondap in Whitsun Week.

“From Thy dwelling-place above,
From Thy FATHER’s Throne of love,
Look upon us here below,
Do not leave us in our woe.”

TWELVE o’clock on a May day ; the glaring sun shining upon the London streets, which were all crowded with holiday folk ; the hops all shut just as if it were Sunday ; and yet there was a look about the great city that was not a Sunday look, it lacked the peace and the calm which marks the Day of Rest, the din and turmoil of the work-a-day world seemed to have been put away only to be exchanged for all the bustle and excitement of the holiday world.

There were folks on foot, and folks in car-

riages, there were four-in-hands laden with passengers going merrily along, and there were donkey carts smartened up for the occasion, and hardly to be recognised as the vehicles which contained potatoes and cabbages in the morning, bearing their masters and mistresses and a baby or two to some place of general resort, perhaps all the way out to Epping Forest.

Poor donkeys, I don't think they enjoyed their holiday. If I tried, I think I could write a very long story indeed about their feelings on that May day; and perhaps the horses and the omnibus drivers and conductors, and the cabmen, would all like me to put in a word for them also, and say that whatever these occasions are to the rest of the London population, they certainly are no holidays to them. But it is not with the pleasure-seeking throng or with anything concerning them that this short story has to do; it is about one of the few workers in the London streets that I am going to tell you to-day, about one of the few into whose life no spark of joy, no gleam of pleasure or of brightness came on that glad holiday.

I am a worker myself,—a Priest in a densely crowded parish, ministering at a Church which not many years ago was shut up from week's

end to week's end, but which now, GOD be praised, is open daily from sunrise until long past sunset, where in the stillness of the early morning hour the Holy Sacrifice is offered upon the Altar, and where before the darkness of night falls upon the great city, we ask GOD to keep us from all the perils and the dangers which without the light of His loving care may come to us ere another day shall dawn.

We have our Mission Services and our Bible classes, our night schools for boys and girls, and we feel that GOD has abundantly blessed our efforts, and crowned our labours with a success we hardly dared to anticipate. Much has been done, much still remains to be done, and when we kneel in the sacred Presence of Him Who died for us upon the Cross, we ask Him to bring into His Fold those souls for whom He shed His own most Precious Blood, and to send into their hearts the light of His HOLY SPIRIT.

I had made up my mind to stay at home, and spend my holiday in my little study with one of my favourite books. It was really my day for house to house visiting in the parish, but the Vicar had told me it would be useless to attempt it, I should find almost every door locked, he said, and if there were any sick, or who wanted

to see any of us, they would be sure to send to the clergy-house.

I wandered on homewards, after having taken the usual midday Celebration at the Church, and was so amused at all I saw during my short walk, that I stood at the corner of the street gazing at the teeming crowds as they passed merrily on their way.

"Please, sir, I thinks your boots wants blacking," said a small voice at my side.

"I don't think they do," I answered somewhat absently, without looking at the speaker, for I knew that Benjamin at the Clergy-house prided himself upon his shoe-blacking powers, and used generally to remark whenever he got a chance of a conversation on the topic with any one of us, that if we only looked at our feet, we could see our faces reflected there as in a mirror.

"Oh, please sir, do have 'em blacked," repeated the poor little miserable voice, and thus entreated I looked down, and saw a half-starved urchin gazing up into my face entreatingly, as though a great deal depended upon my answer.

I could not resist the pleading look; I consigned first one foot and then the other to the boy's tender mercies, and although he seemed

to me a very unnecessarily long time over the performance, I did not hurry him. I was half amused, half curious, as I watched the expression of intense relief which came upon the pinched features as I yielded to his request.

"You have not had much work to do to-day, I suppose," I remarked by way of beginning the conversation.

"No, sir ; yours is the first penny as I shall have took to-day,—fine days is no good to us, sir, it's the rain and mud as we wants."

"Are you not going for a holiday?" I asked.

"No, I can't, 'twould be *unpossible*," and there was a weary sigh, and a wistful yearning look at the gay crowds.

"Impossible,—why, is your master such a very hard one?"

"No, he's good enough in his way ; we've all got leave to-day, and most of the chaps as I knows are gone to 'Ampstead 'eath ; but 'twas unpossible for me to go, so I comed out to try and earn a bit for myself, for all we gets to-day the master says he'll take no account of, it's to go into our own pockets ; so this here penny is a-going into mine," and the little shoeblack with something of a comical grin upon his face, suited the action to the word ; then again he looked up

at me and began, " You're a parson, ain't you, sir ? "

" Yes, I suppose that is what you would call me ; can I do anything for you, my little man ? "

He answered my question by another.

" Do you know why it is *unpossible* for me to go a-holiday-making to-day ? "

" No, I cannot say that I do."

" And you'll not tell if I tells you ? "

" No, certainly not."

" Well, father's bad, very bad, and I can't leave him."

" But why need that be a *secret* ? "

A puzzled expression came upon the boy's face as he replied, " *He* don't wish people to know how bad he is, he don't wish any one but me to come near him down in the cellar where we lives in Smith's Alley, because, because, but may be you'll laugh at me if I tell you, as the chaps does in the street."

" No, I will not, I promise you that."

It was a somewhat difficult matter to keep my promise, however, when my poor little friend drew himself up and said, " Because we was gentlemen once, father and me."

By a violent effort I succeeded in maintaining my gravity, but I suppose there was something

of incredulity expressed on my face, for the boy turned upon me almost fiercely, and said,

" You didn't laugh, because you said you wouldn't, and you're a parson, and parsons don't tell lies, but I can see you don't believe me, because I'm a shoeblack, and because I speaks bad, father's always a-telling me about my speaking,—he speaks beautiful, he do, and writes too, but the other chaps learns me bad grammar, and I can't help it."

I noticed now what I had not noticed at first, that in spite of the undeniably bad grammar there was a soft intonation of the voice which was not generally to be found amongst the small boys of the Shoeblack Brigade.

" I do believe you," I answered ; " what is your name, my man ? "

" Sam," was the curt reply.

" Sam what ? "

The honest brown eyes were lifted up trustingly to my face now, and Sam answered,

" I mustn't tell you the other name, I mean the name as belonged to us when we was gentlemen, *he* said I wasn't to."

" Very well, my boy, just as you like, but can I help your father ? would he see me if I paid him a visit ? Smith's Alley is in my district, but

it was only separated from the Parish Church last week, and given to us down at the Mission Church, so I have not been able to go and see the people yet."

"No, no, you mustn't come," he said, hurriedly; "he'd be angry with me, if he knew that I had as much as told you I had a father,—none of the chaps knows it, they thinks it's my grandmother as lives down in the cellar, and once when one of them comed and followed me home, I growled like a bear, and didn't he just run away, and he advised the others never to come near the old woman lest she should eat em up," and Sam smiled the brightest smile I had yet seen on his little thin face, as he recounted his wonderful achievement; then again he looked up at me with the same trusting look that had come to him, when I told him I believed that he and his father were gentlemen once, and he said, "It wasn't you as spoke at the Church last night?"

"No," I answered, "I was away yesterday, in another part of London, but were you at Church, Sam?"

"Yes, for a bit; I went to the Swan to fetch father's beer, he was a-sleeping, and I knew he wouldn't wake up for a long time, and the doors was open, so I thought I would just have a peep,

and oh, wasn't it beautiful ! and wasn't the music fine ! and what the parson said I had heard all before, I had learned it when we was gentlemen down in the country ; I had almost forgotten it, but he spoke very plain, and very good grammar just like father do, and so I understood all he said, and I liked to hear it."

" What did he say, Sam ?" I asked.

" It was about Whitsun-tide, and about the HOLY GHOST a-coming to help us and to comfort us, and he said He was with us always, never mind if we was poor, never mind if we had to work hard, He'd show us the way to do right, He'd show us the way to Heaven."

" Yes, indeed, Sam, and it is this that makes us so glad at Whitsun-tide, for we have to thank GOD for sending His own most Holy Spirit to teach us, and to help us, and to guide us into all truth. Did you tell your father, my boy, what you had heard ?"

" No, no, he would have been so angry, he told me once never to go into a Church again, because—because of our disgrace, but I couldn't help it last night, indeed I couldn't ; I thought afterwards," and Sam's tones were hushed and reverent as he spoke, " I thought as how it might have been the HOLY SPIRIT as led me there,

because the parson said He led us into all good, and I'm sure it was good to go there. I thought father might ask me where I had been, and then I should have been obliged to tell, for I couldn't tell a lie ; but he didn't, he was very bad last night, and he was worse this morning ; I must go home to him now, and take him his bit of dinner."

My interest in the little shoebblack was increasing every minute ; I was determined to help him if I could, and to see the father, who appeared for some reason or other to wish the mere fact of his existence kept a secret.

"What are you going to get for your father?" I asked.

"It's always the same," answered Sam, "always a chop ; I'm a-going to cook it for him to-day, most times he cooks it himself, because I'm out."

"And what are you going to have for yourself, Sam?"

"The same as I always has too," was the simple reply ; "father don't like the fat, and he always leaves it for me."

"And is that all?"

"Yes, sir, that and a bit of bread ; it's quite enough," added the little fellow quickly, fearing,

I suppose, that I was going to cast some blame upon his father ; "he's so ill, and I'm strong and hearty, and besides I likes fat. Thank you, sir, for having your boots done ; I know 'twas bold to ask you, the weather being so fine, and not a speck upon them, but I wanted a penny just to make up the chop money, the butcher wouldn't have trusted me, though I pays him reg'lar every day."

"Sam," I said, "will you come to me whenever you want help, and will you try to remember that the HOLY GHOST Who was sent to us at Whitsun-tide, Who was given to you at your Baptism, is with you in every trouble, will never leave you, never forsake you, unless you refuse to listen to His gentle voice, unless you drive the Holy Dove away by going on doing wrong things, and not being sorry for them, and asking GOD to forgive you."

"It's like the Vicar used to say at home ever so long ago," murmured Sam, and then he put his poor little thin hand upon mine, and looked longingly at the hymn-book I was carrying, and said, "I suppose you could not lend me that just for to-day, it's like the one we used to have at home, I knows it by the blue cover ; I would bring it back this evening."

"Take it," I answered, "and keep it as long as you like, and perhaps you might like this little Prayer Book as well."

The brown eyes glistened, and Sam clutched at the books, and ran off with them. When he had gone a little way, he came back.

"I'll come to you when I wants anything, sir, but please don't come near father ; may be he'd insult you, and I couldn't abide that, because you've been so good to me."

He gave me no time to answer, but was off again as fast as his little legs would carry him, and I pursued my way home, thinking no more of the holiday folks, but wondering at my strange little friend, and forming plans in my own mind, as to how I should get at his mysterious father.

Many and many a time during that bright May afternoon, as I sat in my study and read, the little pale face with the honest brown eyes seemed to rise up before me, and once or twice, when the bell rang somewhat violently, I had a lingering hope that Sam might have come to seek the help I had promised him.

It was the evening of that Monday in Whitsun Week ; I had come home from evensong, with a feeling of gladness in my heart, for the great in-

estimable blessing which came to the Church on that day of Pentecost more than eighteen hundred years ago. The words of the Whitsun-tide hymn were in my mind :

“ O let us worship Him, the Love
Of FATHER and of SON,
The Consubstantial Breath of GOD,
The co-Eternal One.”

“ Ah, see how like the Incarnate Word,
His blessed Self He lowers,
To dwell with us invisibly,
And make His riches ours.

“ Most tender Spirit ! mighty GOD !
Sweet must Thy Presence be,
If loss of JESUS can be gain,
So long as we have Thee !”

And my soul seemed to go out in one great burst of thanksgiving for the great, the Infinite blessing that the loss of JESUS upon earth brought to His Church ; for a time I had no thoughts to give to the little shoeblack.

The Vicar and my fellow-curates had not yet returned to the Clergy-house, and I saw that our worthy housekeeper Mrs. Briggs was much put out, at the fact that the nice hot supper which had been prepared for us in honour of the Festival was likely to be kept about for some inde-

finite time ; wait altogether it would not, for it was one of our rules that whoever was at home at the appointed hour, was to sit down and eat his meal. Indeed, it was very seldom that we all sat down together, "comfortable like," as Mrs. Briggs expressed it. We promised better things when the district was in more working order, but for the present the good woman had to exercise a considerable amount of patience.

I saw her engaged in an animated discussion with Benjamin, our old factotum of shoeblacking celebrity ; and I heard her say, " Be quiet now, do, Benjamin, let the dear young man take his supper in peace ; his ma was here the other day, and said I was to keep him regular to his meals."

My dear good mother : I could not resist a smile when I heard that she had been discussing me with Mrs. Briggs. The one bugbear of her life was that I should overwork myself ; it was in vain I told her I had never been so well, nor so happy as I was now.

" Well, I knows regular meals is a great thing," answered Benjamin, " but you see, Mrs. Briggs, the poor little chap was in awful trouble ; says he, Promise you sends him as soon as he comes home, or it may be too late."

"What is it, Benjamin?" I asked.

And the poor old fellow, looking it must be confessed somewhat afraid of Mrs. Briggs' inevitable wrath, answered in a low tone,

"It's a little boy from Smith's Alley, as wants you."

"Yes, I know, a shoebblack; did he say the number?"

"Yes, sir, number 10, in the cellar."

"All right; give me my hat."

I heard Mrs. Briggs' groans of lamentation as I hurried down the steps, into the crowded streets.

"I will not be longer than I can help," I called out, by way of some small consolation; "and I see the Vicar coming from Church now."

It was a difficult task to get on as quickly as I wished. The pleasure-seekers were coming home, and sounds of mirth and of revelry fell upon my ears; and sometimes words of sin and of blasphemy echoed through the summer air. Ay, in this Christian land of ours, there were those who on this bright Festival, when we thank God for sending us the light of His HOLY GHOST, grieved that same gentle, holy, pure Spirit by profaning the most Sacred Name.

I knocked at the door of number 10, Smith's Alley ; there was no answer, and I opened it, and found my way down some dark stone steps. I stood uncertain what to do, and then I heard a voice I thought I recognised, and I lifted the latch of the door opposite to me, and stood for a minute gazing at the scene within. On a low bed lay the man, who once had been a gentleman—a poor, haggard looking fellow, whose bloated face bore evident traces of drink and dissipation. He was very ill, I could see that at a glance, and his hollow racking cough rang through the wretched cellar, with pitiless mournful echo.

By his side sat Sam, reading out of the Prayer Book I had given him that morning ; and the words that he was reading were the most comforting words of the Holy Gospel for the day.

“ GOD so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For GOD sent not His SON into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already ; because he hath not believed in the name of the Only-begotten SON

of GOD. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

The boy's voice sounded strangely sweet as he read, and a softened expression came over the man's face.

"Sam," he said, "I have loved the darkness because my deeds were evil; I knew better once, boy, I was well taught. It was the thought of my dear old mother that came into my heart when you were out this morning, Sam, and made me think I should like to see a clergyman before I went away. I don't know what put it there, it seemed to come of itself."

"Father, dear father, it was God's own Holy Spirit who came to us all at Whitsun-tide. I went to Church, last night, father, I could not help it; I did not want to disobey you, and the Parson said as how the HOLY GHOST put all good thoughts into our minds."

"Sam," and the father's hand was laid lovingly

upon the boy's head, "Sam, I've not been good to you—I've been selfish and wicked—GOD only knows how wicked, and yet He sent JESUS to die for me. You have just read the words, and perhaps even at the last I may be forgiven. Will the Parson come, Sam, and speak to me of hope?"

"Yes, father, he will be here soon, let me make you comfortable;" and with a woman's tenderness the little shoebblack arranged the pillows, and drew the covering more closely round the poor emaciated form.

I thought it was time to step forward, and as I did so a gleam of joy came upon Sam's face.

"Oh, sir, father axed me where I had been, and how much money I had got, and I was obliged to tell him all, and he was took much worse, and he said as how he should like to see you."

"It is good of you to come, sir," said the man; "it's a poor place to ask you to. I was a gentleman once—but sin and drink have brought me to this—I—"

The farthing rush-light was burning very low in the medicine bottle, which served as a temporary candlestick, and I gave Sam a penny and

him to go and get a couple of candles. I
ht the child had better not hear all his
seemed bent upon saying.

You had better take a turn round the streets,
I said, "and let father and I have a little
and Sam took the hint and went off
ig.

en I listened to the story of the sinful,
d, and most unhappy life. I will write it
here in as few words as I can.

in Warren had been born a gentleman; he
een left an orphan at an early age, and had
ed a young wife when he was little more
t boy. They had loved each other very
, but no thought of God or of religion had
in their minds; they had let Sam go to
l—a school kept by a good old maiden
nd she had taken the little fellow to Church
ad taught him things which somehow or
he had never forgotten. Warren was a
in a country bank. After a time, both he
is wife took to drinking; and one morning
ft her home—left her husband and her boy
er to return; he could not hold up his
gain after the dire disgrace that had come
; he and Sam had come to London, and
d picked up what stray work he could,

until his health had completely failed, and then the boy had got into the Shoeblack Brigade, and had supported him. What Sam had been to his father I could only guess at then ; the poor fellow seemed ashamed of his selfishness, and of his evident neglect of his loving little son. I was afterwards, when the work of real repentance began in the softened heart, that I heard of all that Sam had borne so nobly and so unselfishly. The erring wife and mother was dead ; a humble penitent letter had come from her two years before my story begins.

I heard all this before Sam returned with his candles, and I spoke to the poor man of hope through the love which God had shown, in sending His Only-begotten SON to save sinners.

"Oh, sir, will you pray for me that I may leave the darkness, and come into the light?"

And I promised him that I would pray for him many times a day.

"I am so glad, so happy," said Sam, as he opened the door to let me out ; "I never thought such joy could come to me to-day. I asked God to send His Holy Spirit to father, to tell him to send for you. I stood a bit under the lamp post this morning before I came here. You see I couldn't kneel down in the street

and it seems as though GOD had heard my prayer, and you'll make father happy, won't you, sir?"

"I will try, Sam," I said; and I went away glad and thankful too, thinking as the songs of the pleasure-goers fell upon my ear, that Sam in his dismal cellar, had realized the true joy and blessing of Whitsun-tide.

Day after day I sat by the side of John Warren's bed, and saw the clouds of darkness roll away by degrees, and light come into the poor sin-sick soul. There were terrible memories of the past to embitter the present joy; the remembrance of the many sins seemed sometimes almost to obliterate the remembrance of the Infinite mercy, of the marvellous love of Him Who had died to save him—but in time there was peace; the man's health improved; I got him out of the cellar, into a more airy room, and I managed to procure a little law copying for him to do at home; he would not let Sam bear all the burden.

The summer passed away, and Christmas was drawing near; and on Christmas Day father and son were to make their first Communion; John Warren had been confirmed, but had never been

a Communicant ; Sam, more happy and thankful than ever, had received the seven-fold gifts of grace during Advent.

I saw them both as they knelt at the Holy Altar on the most holy Festival of the Nativity ; I noted that there were tears rolling down John Warren's rugged features, but on the face of his little son there was a smile of ineffable joy.

I spoke to them after the mid-day Service, and wished them a happy Christmas, and Warren clasped my hand, and muttered words about his exceeding happiness.

“ You go home, father, you are tired, and I'll run round to the baker's, and get the meat, and you shall have your dinner soon.”

“ He *will* take care of me,” said poor John ; “ oh, sir, what should I do without my boy ? ”

I stayed on talking to some more of our people, and as I crossed the street which led to the Clergy-house I saw a crowd assembled.

“ Poor little chap, who is he ? where does he live ? ” asked several anxious voices.

A strange foreboding of coming sorrow was at my heart. I pushed my way through the crowd and saw Sam lying all still and senseless in the arms of a policeman.

"It was a cab as done it, just as he was at the turning, with his bit of dinner in his hands ; it comed round and knocked him down, and the wheel went over his head."

I did not speak ; I led the way to the little shoeblack's home, where his father was waiting for him, and I tried to tell him what had happened.

He was very calm and quiet. "I thought I was too happy to-day, sir," was all he said.

Late that night Sam opened his eyes.

"Father, is it Whitsun-tide again ? I think it must be, and the Comforter has come to lead me home."

"Cast far our deadly foe,
Thy peace in us fulfil ;
So Thou before us leading,
May we escape each ill."

Clearly and distinctly he said the words of his favourite hymn, and then the light, we may humbly hope, led little Sam safe home.

Six months afterwards a friend of mine going to a Mission in a distant land wanted a lay helper, and John Warren went with him, and the last I heard of him was, that by his gentle loving

ways, and by the help of the HOLY SPIRIT, he was winning many souls to JESUS. And so the light that little Sam left behind him still seems to shine upon earth.

OUR MASTER'S GARDEN.

Tuesday in Whitsun Week.

Our Master hath a garden which fair flowers adorn,
Here will I go and gather both at eve and morn ;
Nought's heard therein but Angel hymns with harp and
lute,
oud trumpets and bright clarions and the gentle sooth-
ing flute.

he lily white that bloometh there is Purity,
he fragrant violet is surnamed Humility,
Nought's heard therein, &c.

he lovely damask rose is there called Patience,
he rich and cheerful marigold Obedience,
Nought's heard therein, &c.

ne plant is there with crown bedight the rest above,
'ith crown imperial, and this plant is Holy Love,
Nought's heard therein, &c.

"But still of all the flowers the fairest and the best,
Is JESUS CHRIST the LORD Himself, His Name be blest,
Nought's heard therein, &c.

"O JESU, my chief good and sole felicity,
Thy little garden make my ready heart to be ;
So may I once hear Angel hymns with harp and lute,
Loud trumpets and bright clarions and the gentle sooth-
ing flute."

I AM going to tell you a dream, dear children,
a dream that I really dreamt long long ago,
and the memory of which has been with me ever
since, was with me in the days of my youth, and
still stands out amongst the sweet and sacred
remembrances of those far away years.

I had just been Confirmed and received my first Communion ; my dear old father had prepared me for the Holy Sacraments, and it was his teaching that came back to me in my sleep, and instead of his voice, it seemed to me as though the voice of an Angel spoke to me, and showed me, those wonderful things which I am going to write down here.

It was during the bright joyous festival of Whitsun-tide that my father preached from those most beautiful mystical words, "I am come into thy garden, my Sister, my Spouse," and he told us what that garden was, even the soul of the

ithful. And then he went on to speak of the flowers that ought to bloom there, and he quoted that sweet carol of another land, "Our Master hath a garden."

"The lily white that is in the Master's garden, my children," he said, "is Purity, that is to say, a single eye towards God; no *second* motive is to be in the soul, the one and only aim in all things to glorify God. The FATHER must look into it, as into a mirror, and see nought but His own Image reflected there.

"The sweet fragrant violet is Humility, the foundation of all Christian virtues, the sure preparation for the Life of Grace, the precious pearl which the Eternal God came down to this earth to seek. Just as the tiny violet hides itself from view, so this sweet humility seeks not the praise, or the notice of men, and yet sheds its fragrance on all around.

"The lovely damask rose is Patience; and what is Patience? not only bearing the troubles and bereavements that God sends into our lives—not enduring them only, but bowing to them, viewing them, because they come from God.

"The rich and cheerful marigold is Obedience, not merely keeping the commandments and precepts of the Church in the letter, but in the

fulness of the spirit, listening to the faintest, softest whisperings of the HOLY GHOST.

“And then—

‘One plant there is with crown bedight the rest above,
With crown imperial, and this plant is Holy Love.’

Love that embraces and crowns all the other virtues. Love doth not behave itself unseemly,—seeketh not her own (Purity.) ‘Love is not puffed up,’ (Humility.) ‘Love beareth all things, endureth all things,’ (Patience.) ‘Love believeth all things—hopeth all things,’ (Faith and Obedience.)

“And the fairest of all these fair flowers is JESUS CHRIST the LORD Himself—the Master and Owner of the Garden.

“And what are the sounds that should be heard in this lovely place where JESUS dwells?

‘Nought’s heard therein but Angel hymns with harp and lute,
Loud trumpets and bright clarions, and the gentle sooth-ing flute.’

“The Angel hymns are the songs of praise and adoration—the perpetual recollectedness of the Master’s Presence within and around us—the harp and lute are the breathings of the Blessed Spirit, and sweet communings with JESUS.

"The trumpets and bright clarions are the songs of victory and triumph over temptation, and the gentle soothing flute is the peace of a good conscience towards God."

Dear children, will you try and make your souls a fitting place for your LORD to dwell in? will you cherish the virtues which He loves? will you now, at this holy Whitsun-tide, ask that the Spirit of Love may be breathed into your hearts, making you who kneel at the Altar of God, and receive Him into yourselves, pure, and humble, and patient and obedient, even as JESUS was, during all those three and thirty years of His Sacred Life on earth?

Much more my father said on that bright summer's evening, as I sat in the seat in the dear old Church, where I had sat ever since I was a little girl; and when the sermon was over, and the blessing had been given, I knelt on for a very long time, and asked God to send the Sweet Holy Forbearing Dove to help me in my journey through life.

"Little one, where are your thoughts?" the dear old father said as I kissed him, and bent my head to receive his usual benediction.

"In the Master's garden," I answered.

"God bless you, my darling, and make the

little garden of your heart meet for the Master to dwell in, that so when the Angel comes at last, He may take you to the bright exceeding loveliness of the fair garden of His Paradise."

And then I went to sleep and dreamed my dream.

I was standing one dark night in the streets of a great town, the wind was howling fiercely, the snow was falling in thick white flakes around; no light was to be seen, no moon nor stars, nothing to cheer the gloom, nothing to speak of hope.

I saw four children standing shivering on the pavement, two little girls and two boys, all equally miserable and poor, all crying piteously because there was no one in all the cold wide world to care for them.

I thought I saw One brush past them in the darkness, with soft white wings; I thought that as the fair Being passed them their crying was hushed; I turned away for an instant, and when I looked again the children had vanished, and there sounded through the wintry air a cry like the cry of a little child, and yet there was a strange sweetness in that wailing sound, something that seemed to speak of joy in the midst of sorrow.

As I was wondering what it all meant some
ne touched me gently, and a voice more loving
nd gentle than any I had ever heard said, " My
hild, would you see the end of this?"

" Yes," I answered, " I would see those chil-
ren again, who were here just now; I would
now the meaning of the cry which has just
choed through the air."

" My child, by that cry those little ones are
aved, for to-night is Christmas night, and in a
one manger with the ox, and the ass, with the
old wind blowing round His Sacred Head, the
AVIOUR of the world lies—born to suffer, born
o save."

Then it seemed as though my Angel guide,
for I knew now that he who had spoken to me
(as an Angel) took me into his arms, and flew
way with me, and when I looked up again the
cene indeed had changed. I was standing in a
Church more beautiful than any I had ever seen,
nd at the font stood a Priest clad in pure white
arments, and at his side were the little children
had seen in the street.

I heard him tell them what the Angel had
old me, of the great great good that had come
o them on that night, and he asked them if
hey would be made God's own children, and if

they would try and win the beautiful country which the Holy Child had come from heaven earth, to make them inheritors.

"Yes," answered the little ones, with voice.

"But, my children, the way to the Count hard and difficult, over stony roads and rough places, and sometimes you will faint and sometimes your courage will fail."

"But are we sure to get there at last?" asked one little boy, who seemed bolder than the others.

"Sure? yes, if you follow in the steps of the Holy Child—if you practise the virtues & make you worthy of His Love. My little ones, the road may be thorny, but the end is a glorious Crown, and you may each of you wish to promise each of you to be pure, humble and patient and obedient, and to God before all else? A great gift will be given to you when you are washed in the waters of baptism; God will send His HOLY SPIRIT to you, to be with you always, to keep you from all harm."

Much more he said, and then in the Name of the Most Holy Trinity those little friends were baptised, and made God's for ever.

They called the girls Mary and Ruth, the boys Hugh and David ; and I saw that to each of them was given a flower : to Ruth a lily, to Mary a violet, to Hugh a bright damask rose, and to David a shining marigold ; and then a plain wooden cross was put into each little hand, and I heard the Priest say,

“When you look at it, you must think of the Love of JESUS, and all will be easy to bear. The flowers will grow beneath the shadow of the cross, but if once you throw the cross away, they will all wither and die.

“I have only given one flower to each of you, but you must all strive to get the others ; one will help you to all, and the Holy Spirit of Love which has been given you to-day in your Baptism will shed His Light in your hearts, and make all CHRIST-like graces to be yours.

“My children, when you have walked along the thorny road, and stand at the last, before the golden gates of the Beautiful City where the Master lives, He will look to see if those four flowers are in your hands, and whether they have grown as they ought to have grown sheltered by His Cross, and by His Love, from the fierce winds of this troublesome world.”

“Shall we not see the Master until we have

walked along the thorny road?" asked little David, looking up wistfully into the Priest's face.

" My child, no ; you may not see Him, for He has gone to His bright Home above to make a place there for you, and for all little children, and all people who try to do His Will. But He comes to you even on earth, to help you and to watch over you. He gives Himself to you to be your strength and your stay in His own Holy Sacrament of Love ; and your hearts are to be the little gardens in which He is to be received. You must keep them pure and clean, so that He may come to you and dwell with you : no evil thought must be there, no angry passions, no fretful murmurings, no sins of disobedience, for JESUS is Pure and Holy, and all must be pure and holy where He is.

" My children, do not fear, do not be cast down because I tell you of troubles by the way ; think only of the loveliness of the other side, where the Master lives, and where we shall see the King in His beauty, and live with Him for ever and for ever."

Then the Priest took the children out of that beautiful Church into the cold and the snow once more, but they were no longer clothed in

filthy rags—no longer did they cry in their misery and in their loneliness. They were clad now in the pure white garments of Baptismal innocence, and the sheltering arms of the Holy JESUS were around them, and they knew that they were safe from harm.

They passed on into a large garden, where there were trees and flowering shrubs, but the snow hid from view the flowers that would spring up ere long, and shed their sweet fragrance on all around.

Only beneath one huge tree some modest violets were growing, and I heard the Priest say, "These little flowers are the emblems of that humility which must be the beginning of the Christian life. We must be content to work on unseen, unnoticed, just as our Blessed LORD JESUS CHRIST lived His Incarnate life on earth,—uncared for, unthought of, whilst He was doing the very greatest good, performing the very greatest work that had ever been thought of—for it was indeed a Divine Thought, that coming of the God-Man to save the world from sin and from death."

I looked at the children as they stood and listened to these words, and I saw little Ruth's blue eyes fill with tears as she gazed at the flower

she held in her hand. Then David, who seemed to be the boldest of them all, said,

“ May we pick some of these violets, such as Mary has ? ”

And the answer came, sweet and gentle,

“ No, my child, not yet ; not till you have learned the lesson which the violet teaches.”

I thought I saw the angry colour rise to little David’s cheek, because of his disappointment ; I thought the bright marigold he held in his hand grew paler, and then it seemed to me that he held up his cross, and the frown went from his brow, and the flower bloomed more brightly than it had yet done. And I heard through the wintry air the soft sweet music of a harp and of a lute, and I turned to my Angel guide to know what it meant.

“ The boy was angry,” he said, “ but he looked to the cross for help, and the harp is the HOLY SPIRIT breathing upon him, and leading him to right, and the lute is the Voice of JESUS, telling him of all His love. Hark, and you will hear still louder strains.”

I listened, and as David turned away from the flowers which he was forbidden to touch, there came the glad sound of trumpets, and of clarions, and then a sweet low murmur as of a flute.

Again I turned to have these things explained to me.

"The trumpets and clarions are the rejoicings of the angels at the child's victory over temptation ; the flute is the peace that has come into his own soul,—look at him now."

I looked, and there was upon David's face a smile of peace unutterable ; it seemed as though angels had brushed past him with their wings, and left some of their brightness there.

"We will leave the children for awhile," said my guide ; "we will come to them again by-and-by, and see how it fares with them."

When next I stood in the garden the scene had indeed changed ; the snow had all gone now, there were flowers blooming everywhere, lilies, and roses, and shining marigolds, and countless other glorious blossoms, and violets still hidden beneath the trees, only to be detected because of the excessive sweetness that was wafted from them by the summer breeze upon all the air around.

There were many other children in the garden now, tending their own little gardens. All were clad in white, but some of the garments that ought to have been so pure, were sadly stained,

and some of the little faces bore upon them marks and scars, which my guide told me were the marks and scars of sin.

I had not time to look at them all, I wanted to see those in whom I felt so deep an interest.

And first I sought out Ruth amongst all the crowd. The little one had grown very much since that Christmas night when I saw her first; like the other children she was tending her garden, and some one passed by and remarked how beautiful it was.

The sweet modest colour rushed to the little face as the girl answered,

"Oh, you have not seen Mary's,—her garden is ever so much more beautiful than mine, and so is David's; they never waste their time, they are always working, always thinking of how they may please the Master, and sometimes I am very tired, and I fail."

I saw no sign of failure as I gazed upon the child, but as she thus talked of her friends, and spoke so little and so humbly of herself, I thought I heard the angels' voices, and the trumpets and the clarions. She held a lily and a rose, and a marigold in one hand, whilst with the other she firmly grasped her wooden cross, and did her day's work.

No violets in all the Master's garden smelt as sweet as those that lay hidden beneath the brighter flowers that were in little Ruth's grasp, and it seemed to me as though the plain wooden cross shone with a strange light as she held it up on high.

And Mary,—how fared it with her? Bright and strong and loving she looked as she too did her day's work, and the flowers that now I knew made up the perfection of Christian life were in her hand, growing, it seemed to me, around the cross, which stood so conspicuous amongst them all. The white lily that had been given her in Holy Baptism had no bruise nor stain upon its pure leaves, and buds had grown around it and made it a large plant, not hidden like the violet, but foremost amongst all the other flowers in its richness and its beauty.

Two children passed Mary as she worked, and they stopped to talk to her, and she answered them gently and kindly, and then they said something which I could not hear; but the girl turned away and hid her sweet face amongst the blossoms of her lily.

The children, angry and disappointed, walked off with a mocking laugh, but above the sounds of derision I heard the clarions and the trumpets,

and the sweet gentle music of harp, and lute, and flute.

"Do you understand it all?" said my guide.

"Hardly," I answered; "may I know what it means?"

"Those children were tempting Mary to listen to words which should not sully the ear of any Christian child, they were asking her to read books full of amusing stories, but which were better left unread. She did not understand them at first, did not know what they meant, but she always turns to her cross when she is in doubt or in difficulty, and if she sees no shadow fall from the cross upon her lily, she knows that the thing she is tempted to do is not a right thing; for the lily is the emblem of all purity, sacred to all time, because God's own angel carried one in his hand when he took to the pure Virgin Mother of God the glad tidings of salvation."

I thanked my guide for telling me all this, and then I said, "Where are the boys, Hugh and David,—may I not see them?"

"Yes; follow me."

I followed him through many a winding devious path, out of the fair garden with all its bright flowers into a wild-looking waste where

thorns and briars and thistles grew, where all was cold and dark and dreary. And David was there with a hammer in his hand, breaking stones by the wayside.

He looked pale and ill, but there was an expression of happiness on the young face which reminded me of that look which I noticed had come to little Ruth, and which I thought belonged to the angels.

I was astonished at seeing him there, for I had heard Ruth speak of the beauty of his garden, and here he was all alone in this desolate place.

I looked again, and by his side I saw those four flowers growing, the marigold, his own especial flower, overtopping them all, and it seemed to me that there were jewels in his cross, which I had seen in none of the others.

There were some noisy unruly children at play not very far off, and whilst I marvelled at what I saw, they came up to the boy and said,

"So they've taken away your fine garden from you, or have you got tired of doing what you were told to do, and have come here to do as you like and have your liberty. You're a fool to be breaking stones, David, come along and play with us."

"I came here because I was told to come," answered David bravely, "because my cross pointed here, and I am very happy, although it is not quite as pleasant as the beautiful garden; but the Priest says that the places where we are *sent* are the surest way to the Beautiful City, and so I like to be here."

Even as he spoke, louder than I had yet heard them, sounded the angels' shouts of joy, sweeter than any music that had ever fallen upon my ear, was the music of the harp and lute. I knew why it was, I knew that the grace of obedience always brings with it a rich reward, and that because David had left all that was so pleasant, to follow the Master's commands, I knew that there was great rejoicing in the courts above.

"And Hugh," I said, "where is he?"

I thought my guide sighed as he answered, "Come and see," and I wondered whether Hugh had fallen away from the promises he had made at his Baptism, whether he had lost his cross, and suffered his rose to wither.

I was not long left in doubt. In a far away corner of the garden the boy was standing; no flowers around him, only faded leaves, and in his hand he held his rose, his beautiful damask rose, which had turned to a sickly hue; it was

ot quite dead, and something of hope came to my heart when I noticed that Hugh still held his cross—not firmly, not lovingly, but just balanced between his fingers ; it seemed to me as if one breath of wind would throw it to the round.

The boy was not alone ; the Priest who had baptised the children was standing by his side, talking to him gravely and earnestly.

"I cannot go on," I heard Hugh say. "I did not know when I said I would be one of the Master's children that the work would be so hard, —no one can do it ; I tried hard at first, and the flowers began to grow, the lilies, and the violets, and the marigolds, but sometimes I was at play, and I forgot to water them, and one by one they died, and now it is no use to try any more ; I am thinking of throwing my cross away."

"You cannot," answered the Priest sternly, "it has been marked upon your brow ; it will stand there as a witness against you in the last great day."

The boy trembled : "I cannot go on,—no one can."

"No one ? oh, Hugh, the Master trod the steep hill of Calvary for you, can you not have patience to the end ?"

And then a thrill of joy came to my heart, for I saw Hugh grasp his cross more firmly, and as he held it above the fast fading rose, I thought its colour deepened, and that something of the old richness and brightness was there still.

"It will be harder than ever now, worse a great deal than it was at first."

"Yes, my boy, it will, of that there is no doubt, but, Hugh, there will be help to-morrow in your Confirmation if you will only come."

"I cannot; I should be ashamed for the others to see my faded rose."

"Hugh, shame must be a part of your penance, you must bear it because of your sin,—but it is not of what your companions will say that you must think, it is of the grief that you have caused the Master, and the gentle Holy Dove."

"Is there no mercy, no hope?"

"My boy, your own flower speaks to you of the greatest,—it is said that there was no red rose until the first Good Friday, that white roses blossomed at the foot of the Cross, and that the Precious Blood dropped down upon them, and turned them rosy red—and so the red rose is the emblem of patience, for it tells of the greatest suffering that ever was borne, of the greatest grief that ever was endured,—and all the suffer-

ing and all the grief was for our sakes, for us men and for our salvation."

Hugh's tears were falling fast now, and I saw him kneel at the Priest's feet ; and then I heard and saw no more, but I prayed that all might be well with the erring boy.

Again I stood in the beautiful Church, where the children had been baptised, and I saw those four kneel at the Holy Altar, and receive the sevenfold gifts of grace at the hands of the Bishop. Ruth, with downcast eyes, and the sweet smile I had noticed before ; Mary, gentle and stately, and pure ; David, brave and strong, and resolute ; and Hugh,—poor Hugh, with his faded rose,—never shall I forget the sight : I saw his lip quiver, and his limbs tremble, and he grasped his cross so tightly, that blood flew from his hands,—and strange though it may appear, the blood fell upon the rose, and seemed to make it brighter, whilst it washed the stains from his soiled garments, and brought back some of their original whiteness.

A few days more, and in that same Church I saw the little ones again ; once more they were kneeling at the Altar : and now for the first time,

they took their LORD and Master into the little garden of their soul, in His own most Blessed Sacrament.

There was a violet in Hugh's hand on that day, and I thought I could detect two green buds,—a lily and a marigold,—and I was very glad and thankful for the boy on that day.

It was the Tuesday in Whitsun Week, and as the words of the Gospel told of the exceeding love of the Good Shepherd, I saw a smile of hope on Hugh's upturned face. And the trumpets and clarions broke out into glad sounds of triumph, and round each child's head there was a crown formed of a flower more lovely than anything I had yet seen,—and my angel guide told me it was called Crown Imperial, and that it was the emblem of the Master's love, and of the HOLY SPIRIT'S watchful care.

“And in that love and care we must leave them,” said my Angel guide, listening to the harp and lute, and to the far away melodies of the Garden of Paradise.

And so my dream ended, and I awoke to the realities of every-day life.

“ Oh, Spirit, LORD and GOD,
Come dwell and rest with me ;
And kindle here the fire
Of living love to Thee.
For I thy child have been
Through all my youthful days,
Since at the Fount of Love
I first received Thy grace.
For I am weak, alone,
And need Thy present power
Through life's uncertain daily strife,
And in my dying hour.

“ Oh, Fount of Life and Peace,
Flow through my thirsting soul ;
Sustain a holy life
Until I reach the goal.
When I grow faint, refresh ;
When I have erred, renew ;
When I am dull shed forth
The showers of Thy dew.
For I am weak, &c.

“ Oh, Beam of Living Light,
Sun of my shadowed way,
Pour forth upon my soul
The brightness of Thy ray ;
And when the tempter's power
Shall too successful be,
Oh pierce those mists of sin,
And bid those shadows flee.
For I am weak, &c.

" Oh, Breath which JESUS breathed
Upon His Church of yore,
Fill me with heavenly life,
As Thou hast done before.
May every day I live
Be sacrificed by me,
That when those days are past,
I still may be with Thee.
For I am weak, &c.

" Oh, Dove, Who singest peace,
Lull every passion here ;
Raise me when I am faint,
Encourage when I fear.
The music of Thy voice
Shall calm my troubled breast,
If Thou wilt deign to make
This heart of mine Thy rest.
For I am weak, &c.

" Oh, Thou Who once didst move
Upon the watery waste,
And gav'st creation's work
Of life and joy to taste ;
Each Rite divine move o'er,
Move through my every prayer,
Grant in Communion's hour
I still may find Thee there.
For I am weak, alone,
And need Thy present power,
Through life's uncertain daily strife,
And in my dying hour.

STORY OF A QUIET, LITTLE LIFE.

Trinity Sunday.

“ But voices low and gentle,
And timid glances shy,
That seem for aid parental
To sue all wistfully :
Still pressing, longing to be right,—
But fearing to be wrong,
In these the Pastor dares delight,—
A lamb-like, CHRIST-like throng.”

DON’T like Trinity Sunday at all,” said a bright-eyed, merry looking boy, James by name, as he sat upon one of the benches in S. Aldhelm’s school, on a glorious afternoon, waiting for the Vicar to appear, to say a few words to the first class boys as usual on the teaching of each Sunday in the year.

There was Catechising in the Church always, but some of the children who attended the service were tiny boys and girls, and so the Vicar liked to take his lads, as he always called them, and have a little talk with them, all to themselves, before they went to Church.

"Not like Trinity Sunday!" exclaimed a chorus of boys' voices, in answer to James' remark, which they evidently looked upon as somewhat heretical; "what would the Vicar say if he heard you?"

"He'd understand what I mean," answered James, confidently; "he always does understand everything."

"What a happy individual," said a manly, cheery voice, and before the boys were aware of the Vicar's approach, he stood amongst them, with a genial smile upon his face. "What a happy individual, James," he repeated; "I should like to know him,—will you introduce me to him?"

"Please, sir, it's yourself," said the not easily daunted James; "and please, sir, it's true, you always do know everything, and can tell what a fellow means in a moment."

"Well, what is it that I am to understand now, my lad? I will help you if I can, you may be quite sure."

But James was silent ; he had begun to think that Mr. Grant might not after all quite approve of the sentiment he had just expressed.

Tom Rogers, the smallest boy in the first class, answered for him.

"James don't like Trinity Sunday, sir, and he said you would know the reason."

"I—I—I only meant—" began poor James.

"I think I do understand this time, James," answered the Vicar, kindly ; "I am quite sure you meant no irreverence by the remark. Do you know, that when I was a little boy, I remember I had something of the same feeling."

All the boys opened their eyes wide now, and sat very still. To begin with, it was rather difficult to imagine that Mr. Grant ever had been a little boy : he was such a great tall man now, and had such iron grey hair, and he had been into all parts of the world as a Missionary, and he knew ever so many languages, and had seen such wonderful things. And then, if when he was a little boy he had any such thoughts as James had now, why of course James' thoughts were all right, instead of being all wrong, as the boys had hitherto believed them to be.

"Of course it is a very long time since I *was* a

little boy," continued the Vicar, with a smile, looking at the puzzled faces around him.

"How many years?" began Tom Rogers, but his neighbours on each side gave him a pinch, and stopped him. They were on the whole very well trained lads, those S. Aldhelm boys, and did not think it would be quite polite of Tom to ask the Vicar his age; however, he told it them the next minute.

"I am forty-five years old now, boys—getting quite an old man; and about thirty-five years ago, when I was ten years old, I remember saying to my dear old mother, that I didn't like Trinity Sunday, and the reason I gave was, that there was nothing to look forward to for such a long long time: Christmas, and Easter, and Ascension-tide, and Whitsun-tide, had all passed away, and there were no more bright festivals to come, until the autumn leaves had grown sere and yellow, and all the summer joys had gone. I knew of course, I said, that there were the Saints' Days, and I liked those, but they were not the same as the other seasons of which I had spoken, and the six months to Christmas seemed ever so far off."

"There, that's exactly what I meant," ejaculated James; "I told you the Vicar would be sure to understand."

The Vicar only smiled his grave, quiet smile, and went on,

"I remember the words in which my mother answered me, and showed me that I was wrong to say such things, and I will tell you some of the things she told me.

"My boys, we have followed our Blessed LORD from Bethlehem to Calvary ; we have seen Him in the cold manger, a little helpless Child ; we have heard His cry of suffering, when He shed the first drop of His most Precious Blood ; when He was circumcised and became obedient to the law for Man : we have been with Him in the desert during the forty days of Lent ; we looked upon His sufferings in Holy Week, upon the Three Hours' Agony on Good Friday ; and then came the Easter joy, the Ascension glory, the comfort of Whitsun-tide ; and to-day there is, as it were, a pause. All the other bright Feasts of which we have spoken had, as it were, something to do with earth and with man—to-day we have to do only with GOD ; it is, so to speak, the Festival of Worship, the Festival of Mystery, and we bow in all humility before the marvellous Trinity in Unity. We have followed JESUS our Master in His life on earth ; He has taught us the lesson He came to teach, and it is

for us now to walk in His Sacred Footprints, to put into practice the virtues which were all centred in Him. I cannot, I dare not speak to you much of the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Great Saints have not sought to inquire into it, but have only believed. You have all of you heard of S. Patrick, he who is called the Apostle of Ireland?"

"I know about him," said the ever ready Tom Rogers; "old Biddy Maloney always wears a bit of shamrock on S. Patrick's Day."

"It is just about that shamrock that I want to tell you now, my boys, for do you know that it has a great deal to do with Trinity Sunday. I dare say you would like to hear a little about S. Patrick.

"When he was a boy of sixteen years old the village where his parents lived was invaded by a band of pirates, and he was carried away by them, and afterwards sold as a slave to a chieftain named Milcho, who lived in that part of Ireland which is now called Antrim. The young Patrick lived there for six years, tending his master's flock, and trying to do his duty in his new and lonely life.

"After a time, however, his heart yearned to see his parents again, and he managed to escape

to the sea coast, and he got a passage on board a ship, and returned to the home where his father and mother lived. Again he was carried away captive, and again he escaped ; and then it is said that he had a vision, and he heard a call, which he recognised as the voice of the inhabitants of the western coast of Ireland, saying, ‘We beseech thee, holy youth, to come and walk amongst us.’

“S. Patrick then went to Gaul, that country which we now call France, and there he lived in the monastery which had been founded by his uncle, the great S. Martin ; and after a time he became a monk and a priest. After this he went to Rome, and the Bishop of Rome heard his story, and sent him to Ireland to fulfil the work to which it seemed as though he had been called in the vision of which I have told you.

“I cannot here relate all the great work that he did, or how he made the poor Irish people believe in the one true God and JESUS CHRIST, Whom He had sent.

“And now I am coming to the story that has to do with Trinity Sunday. One day S. Patrick was trying to teach his converts the great Mystery of the Christian Faith. He sought in vain to make them understand it, but he could not

find words in which to teach them how to realise the marvellous truth : at last he looked down, and saw a little leaf—the shamrock—growing at his feet ; he stooped down, and picked it, and then he held it up to the crowd, and then he showed them the three tiny leaves growing upon the one stalk, and he told them that so the Three Persons of the Ever-blessed Trinity were one, equal in beauty and glory and majesty,—and those poor ignorant people understood the glorious Mystery of the Three in One.

“And what S. Patrick said to them is all I can say to you to-day, my boys ; I cannot explain more than he explained ; I can only ask you to pray in the words of the collect you have all learned to-day that you may be kept steadfast in this Faith.

“It seems to me that the lesson we are to learn from the teaching of Trinity Sunday is contained in a verse of the Gospel, ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.’

“My boys, we cannot tell how it is that the Trinity of love works in our hearts ; we know we must be born again—born of the Spirit, but

just as we can trace no track left behind it by the moaning roaring wind, just as it comes and goes, and leaves no sign to mark its course, so secretly, inwardly, invisibly is that new birth of the Spirit wrought within us, of which we hear on this Trinity Sunday. It does not seem to me a day to tell of great or heroic deeds, I suppose you want something of a story to-day, and I will tell you the story of a little life, over which it seems to me that a great Love watched ; it was a little, quiet, uneventful life, the wind indeed blew where it listed, and none knew how the Spirit given in Holy Baptism worked in the young heart, until at last GOD saw fit to take the boy of whom I am going to tell you unto Himself, away from those who loved him so dearly to that greater Love for which he had always yearned and pined.

"I was a curate in a northern parish before I went abroad amongst the black men, my boys, and there was an old soldier, who used to come over and see me very often, and of whom I was very fond. On one occasion he told me that his wife had just given birth to her tenth child, and he was puzzled what to call the boy ; 'Call him after me,' I said, laughingly, and to my astonishment, a few days afterwards, I heard

that the child had been named, ‘Edward Grant.’

“I was not his godfather, but yet I could not help taking an interest in him; I was going abroad then, and I thought of him very often, but for ten long years I heard nothing of him, and it was only when I returned to England that I wrote to his father, asking how the boy was getting on. For answer there came a letter written in a large round hand from the lad himself, telling me that he went to school on week-days and Sundays, and that he tried to be a good boy.

“He always ended his letters which came at distant intervals in a quaint way,—calling himself my dutiful name-son; they were written in true schoolboy style, telling me of the prizes he got, and the great things he meant to do when he grew up to be a man, and sometimes there were little bits in them that told of the boy’s reverent thoughtful mind; allusions to God’s goodness in giving him a happy home, and keeping him from want, little loving words about his father, and mother, and brothers and sisters, nothing very great, nothing much to make a story about, but I thought a great deal of my little name-son, living his simple childlike life in that far away northern town.

"I thought I should like to have him with me a while, and prepare him for his Confirmation and First Communion, for Edward was not right as you are taught, my lads, and yet the wind blew where it listed, and the quiet, gentle work of the Spirit was done all unseen, with no outward help but prayer, which kept my little me-sun pure and true, and innocent, all that Christian child ought to be.

"One day the boy went out with one of his others and a schoolfellow, and the friend took the lads to a place where there were a great many rabbits, and showed them how they could catch them. Edward knew that it would be very wrong to do this, that it would be poaching,—he did not stop for one minute, he would not let himself be tempted, he had all a boy's love of adventure, and it was a sore temptation to him just to wait and see what he could do. All through his life he had never told a lie, nor done one dishonest thing, it seemed that the sense of the perpetual Presence of GOD was ever with him, keeping him from all evil, and from all harm. And now he just looked at the rabbits, and then he turned bravely away and ran all the way home without stopping,—it was two miles' run,—but Edward never wavered

nor turned back, in the strength of his right purpose he went on, only caring to escape from the temptation that had come in his way.

"And yet he was brave as a young lion, and he carried with him a gentle influence, the full extent of which was only known and felt when the little quiet life was laid down, and the little soul safe, we may humbly hope, in the Good Shepherd's fold.

"But I must not anticipate. Two years had passed away since my return from abroad, and my little name-son wrote to me and said that he would be twelve years old before Christmas, that his father said he was getting an old man, but he (Edward) did not perceive it, but he supposed we were all getting old, he knew he was.

"There was an odd mixture of grave thoughts and fresh childish feeling running through all his letters, and I wondered what the future would be to him, how he would battle against the waves of this troublesome world, and fight the good fight, and keep 'steadfast in the faith.'

"I prayed for the boy, and my prayers were heard and answered, but not in the way that I had hoped they would be. I had asked that God would help him to lead a good and useful life, and it pleased Him in His infinite wisdom

cut that life on earth short, and to take ward unto Himself.

"I had promised the boy a watch on his tenth birthday, and I believe he looked forward to the time when I should send him the much coveted possession with eager boyish impatience.

"I do not know why it was, that one evening early in December it came into my head that he should have the watch on his twelfth birthday,—what was the use of waiting all those years?

"I sent it; and oh the joy that it caused in that northern home, for Edward's joy was everybody's joy, they all loved him so, they were all so proud of his goodness and cleverness. As for the lad himself, he wrote me one of his quaint epistles, in which he said he hoped he should be able to show me his gratitude by his good conduct.

"I put the letter away, with all the others I had received from my name-son. I little thought it would be the last to be added to the little pile, from the first written in its big round hand to this one, so clean and so neat, and with almost a man's firmness and steadiness about the well-formed characters.

"Two days before Christmas there came a letter from my old friend the soldier, an ominous looking letter with a deep black edge, and I felt that bad news was coming to me at the bright joyous feast. Bad, did I say?—oh surely not, perhaps the best that could come,—for the broken-hearted father told me that my little name-son was safe and at rest, gone to sing the Christmas songs which he had loved to sing in Church in the land that is very far off.

"He had been working very hard at school for the half-yearly examination in which he hoped to take a high place, and on the 19th of December he came home complaining of a bad pain in his head.

"His mother knew he must be very ill to have given in like this, for Edward never made a fuss, and bore all the ill that had come into his little quiet life very patiently. She put him to bed, and there he lay very quiet and good, but his head grew worse, and the fever increased, and those who loved him so well knew that he was going from them. He never rallied, he never spoke, and in two days he had gone from his home,—he who had ever been its sunshine and its brightness.

"I had never seen my little name-son since he

was a fortnight old, but somehow I felt as if a great interest had gone out of my life when Edward died, and yet I could thank God that the boy was taken from the evil to come.

"I heard from his father constantly at this time ; it was touching to read of all the sadness that had come to the happy home, and yet I saw even then that the sorrow was doing its work.

"I said that the watch was to be given to Edward's brother, a lad two years my little name-son's senior. He wrote me a grateful little letter, and told me how he had loved Edward, and how good he had been, and that his one hope was to get a place near him in the other world. 'I am not nearly as good as he was,' he wrote, 'but still I will try.'

"And now a plain stone cross marks Edward's grave ; and out of his own circle there is perhaps no one besides myself who thinks much of the quiet little life which has passed from amongst us.

"I am afraid, my boys, that my story has not been an exciting one, but I told you at the outset that to me Trinity Sunday speaks of quiet things, of the soft wind blowing where it listeth, of the deep silent work of the Blessed

Trinity of light in the hearts that are born of the Spirit.

"On the little card that was given to the schoolfellows who loved my name-son so well, and for which they were all so grateful, these words were written,—

"In Memory of
EDWARD GRANT ERSKINE,
(A child of faith and love,)
Who sweetly fell asleep in JESUS,
22nd December, 187—,
Aged 12 years.

'LORD, all-pitying JESU blest,
Grant him *Thine* eternal rest.'

'Refrain thy voice from weeping and
thine eyes from tears ; thy children shall
come again to their own border.'

"My boys, my short tale is told. Will you pray that, like little Edward, you may keep steadfast in the faith, and that when GOD calls you hence, your baptismal robes may be pure and unsullied as his were? Will you remember that it is in quiet ways that most of us are called upon to serve GOD? we do not now live in troubled times, we cannot be Martyrs for the cause of truth; but we can and must walk along the straight and narrow way which alone leads

to the brightness that shall never die, to the love that shall never grow cold."

"I like Trinity Sunday better now," said James Glover to Tom Rogers as the two walked home from Church that afternoon; "I had always liked to think that one must do something very great indeed if one wanted to be good; but the shamrock wasn't a great thing to teach all the people about the Blessed Trinity, was it, Tom? and there wasn't much about the Vicar's little name-son, except that he always seemed to do what was right, almost, as it were, without thinking about it."

"No, he couldn't have done that," answered the somewhat argumentative Tom; "one has to try ever so hard to be good; the Vicar always says that."

"You don't understand, you stupid," replied James, "you're not a bit like the Vicar; of course we must try, but it comes to some folks to do rightly, most without any trouble, that is, they don't think it a trouble. I think, Tom, Mr. Grant would say that we can't tell how it comes; it's the wind blowing where it listeth."

And Tom assented, and the two boys went home to think of the teaching of Trinity Sunday.

A year had passed away ; once more it was bright Whitsun-tide, and the S. Aldhelm's boys were out for their annual holiday.

Glad and merry enough they were as they sat in the cricket field, and ate their dinner and arranged what they should all do during the afternoon.

James Glover was as usual the leader in everything ; whatever he said was supposed to be right, and when he suggested bathing at the furthest point of the river, which was quite safe, every one was seized with a great desire to bathe.

The Vicar and the Schoolmaster gave ready assent to the plan ; it was as safe as any place in England, Mr. Grant said ; never had an accident been known in all the years that the boys of S. Aldhelm's school had bathed there—only they must all promise not to go out beyond the bridge, for there the current was strong, and it might be dangerous.

There was a great noise on the river's bank on that afternoon ; the boys were all so happy, not a single care weighed down the young hopeful spirits, no sadness, and no sorrow was in their minds on that joyful holiday.

How they gambolled about in the clear water, how they screamed, and laughed, and talked, as

only English boys can scream, and laugh, and talk.

Suddenly there was a cry that was not one of joy ; a sound that carried with it a strange foreboding of sorrow to the Vicar's heart, as he sat beneath the shelter of the spreading trees, basking in the sunshine, and in the unwonted idleness.

In an instant he sprang to his feet.

"What is it?" he said to the Master.

"It is Rogers, sir, he has gone beyond the bridge ; he is out of his depth."

"Can no one help him? Can nothing be done?"

"Glover has gone out to him, sir ; oh, God help them."

"God in His mercy help them," echoed the Vicar, lifting his hat from his head, and an expression of agony coming upon his grave face, for he saw the full extent of the danger now, saw that before any aid could get to them it was probable both boys must sink.

"Let us pray." And then there went up through the soft clear summer air the Priest's voice raised in supplication that the lads might be saved.

"Hold on, hold on tightly, Tom ; your mo-

ther couldn't do without you. Never mind me; there are more of us at home, and she has only you."

And Tom did as he was bid, and the Vicar got a rope and threw it to them, and by God's infinite mercy they were dragged to the shore alive, although thoroughly exhausted and half senseless.

In a few minutes Tom had revived, and opened his eyes, and looked round him wonderingly.

"Oh, sir, I am sorry I was so disobedient. I thought I was dying, and I remembered the story you told us last Trinity Sunday, about the little boy, your little name-son, and I wished, oh, how I wished, I had been as good and obedient as he was."

"We will not talk now," answered the Vicar, sadly, "only we must be thankful, Tom, that you are spared to your mother."

Something in his tone startled poor Tom. "What is it?" he said; "is anything the matter—is James dead? did he die trying to save me?"

"No, no, my boy, he is not dead;" but still Mr. Grant's voice sounded very grave, and his face was very sad.

The doctor had arrived upon the scene, and

he had looked at James anxiously, and had shaken his head and said he feared there was not very much hope ; the boy had been dashed against the bridge, and there was some injury to the spine, the extent of which he could not yet discover.

He was carried home very gently, and for three or four days his life was despaired of, but on Trinity Sunday consciousness returned, and he knew those about him.

Tom was there grateful and penitent, and more sorrowful than he had ever been in all his life, and James turned to his father and mother, and said,

"*His* mother had only him ; I'm so glad he is safe."

"Oh, my boy, my boy, it is a great thing to have saved his life."

"A great thing ; once I wanted to do something great before I died—shall I die now?"

There was no answer, only Tom's loud sobs sounded through the little room.

"Tom, Tom, please don't, only tell me the truth ; shall I die?"

And Tom burst out, "No, no, only they say you'll always have to lie here so quiet and so still all your life."

A tear which could not be repressed rolled down James's cheek, and then there came a smile as he listened to the sweet music of the Church bells.

"Is it Sunday?"

"Yes; Trinity Sunday."

"The Sunday that tells of quiet, the day when the Vicar told us of the little quiet life. Mother, father, I will bear it, because GOD sends it."

And he bore it bravely—and he bears it still; and often and often he tells the Vicar how he had longed to do some great thing, but how since that Trinity Sunday, when he heard of little Edward, he had felt that

"Little things on little wings
Bear little souls to heaven."

Dear children who have read this little story, have you learned the lesson it is meant to teach? Do you know what it is that you must do if you would show that the words of our dear LORD have come home to your hearts, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it com-

:th nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is
born of the Spirit?" Why, you must be very
simple and trusting, you must give yourselves
entirely as it were into God's own most holy
keeping; and ask Him to do with you as He
thinks best.

Never mind what He sends into your lives—
whether it be joy or sorrow, whether He bids
you do some great thing for Him, or whether it
is His gracious Will to lead you on by little
gentle steps along the road to heaven—"the
wind bloweth where it listeth,"—you must always
remember that—and God's own ways are the
ways that lead us Home. Silently and quietly
the HOLY SPIRIT does His work—we know not
how, we must not seek to inquire; we must
only pray; we must only name the Name be-
loved, and all will be well with us.

"Name it in dewy morning,
When duly for the world's keen fray,
With prayer and vow thy soul adorning,
Thou in thy bower salut'st the day.

"In quiet evening name it,
When gently, like a wearied breeze,
Thou sink'st to sleep, O see thou claim it,
That saving Name—upon thy knees.

“Upon thy death-bed name it :
So may’st thou chase th’ infernal horde,
So learn with Angels to proclaim it,
Thrice Holy, One Almighty LORD.”

THE TEST OF LOVE.

First Sunday after Trinity.

“LORD, shower upon us from above,
The sacred gift of mutual love.”

AN old woman was sitting crouching over the fire one cold winter's night, in a little cottage in the village of Winstanton. A small table was at her side, on which stood a large open Bible, and a tabby cat of marvellous size lay purring at her feet.

She was a dear, gentle-looking old soul, that old Granny Lyte. Her hair was as white as silver, and the blue eyes, that once had been so merry and so bright, were very dim now; still there was a certain pathetic beauty about them—a wistful, yearning look that one sometimes sees in the eyes of a very little child, and that

comes back again when, after all the wear and tear and trouble of this weary work-a-day world of ours, something of a child's forgetfulness, and a child's simplicity comes back to us, and a strange dimness is upon the minds that before very long must see all things clearly and distinctly, in the land where all that once was dark is made plain.

Granny Lyte was not alone in her little room. A girl was sitting at the table, trimming up a bonnet or a hat—one hardly knows what name to give the head-gears of the present day—with a gay red ribbon, and some bright flowers to match. A very handsome face it was upon which the old woman gazed from time to time, with an expression upon her wrinkled brow that was half loving, half inquiring, wholly fearful.

Annie Lyte was always considered the beauty of Winstanton. Her mother had been so before her, and the poor child had heard this, and had heard also that she was the image of her dead parent.

"The very spit of her," old Thomas, the gardener at the Hall, had one day observed; "I should have said it was pretty Mary Winslow come back again. And yet I ain't so sure that I should," soliloquised the old man, as Annie,

with her head high in the air, walked away ; “ Mary was as gentle and sweet a lass as ever lived, and I ain’t quite happy about Annie sometimes. I’m afeard she may bring trouble on them as loves her so well. The poor old lady at the cottage hasn’t the sense to see it, and Edgar takes after his mother, and is too loving and good to believe that there’s a bit of wrong in his sister.”

The old gardener was right. Annie grew up a proud wilful maiden, vain of her appearance, vain of her attainments, impatient of all control. Her grandmother doted on her, could see no fault in the lovely child ; and Edgar, her only brother, and her senior by one year, used to say that there was no one in all the world half as good or half as pretty as his sister Annie.

And the girl to all outward appearance *was* a good girl : she was regular at school, regular at Church, and reverent in her behaviour there. She and Edgar had been confirmed together, and both of them were communicants, and every one in the village, except perhaps old Thomas, had a good word to say for Annie Lyte.

The children’s mother had died when they were very young. Their father, a brave sailor in her Majesty’s navy, was always at sea. It was

only every two or three years that he got a few weeks' leave, and then he used to run down and spend a quiet happy time with his old mother and his little ones ; and although he loved both Edgar and Annie very dearly, every one said that the handsome high-spirited girl was certainly his pet.

“ Come, be a man, Edgar,” he would say sometimes to the gentle little boy, “ Annie is twice as brave as you are ; I believe you’re afraid of everything.”

And then the colour would rush into the little pale delicate face, and good-natured John Lyte would be sorry for the pain he saw he had caused his little son.

“ I dare say you’ll be all right when you grow older, my lad. You’re not so strong as Annie, you see, and that makes you timid.”

It was quite true, Edgar *was* timid. Oh, how he wished his heart would not beat so, when he and Annie met a herd of cows in a narrow lane, or when Farmer Giles’ huge mastiff jumped upon them when they passed the farm-yard gate. Annie used to laugh and make fun of it all, and his knees were trembling all the time, and he felt such a coward—so unworthy of being his father’s son.

As the years went on he grew braver, but still he was not like Annie ; *she* didn't mind what she said to any one, and *he* couldn't bear to give pain to a living creature. Once he had tried to shield a little boy who was stealing Granny's apples, and Annie had been very angry with him, and had told him he was very wrong.

"We must not be hard upon the poor little chap," Edgar had answered, for the first time in all his life casting a shadow of blame upon Annie ; "we must not be hard upon him, Annie, he had had nothing to eat all day. I know it was wrong to steal the apples, but oh, I thought if we had been as hungry as he was, we might have been tempted to do as he did."

And Annie had tossed her head and said nothing, and Edgar was ashamed when he caught himself wishing that his good pretty Annie would not be quite so "down upon people as she sometimes was."

Now when my story begins a great trouble was weighing poor Edgar's gentle spirit to the earth, and was casting a shadow upon poor old Granny's life—although the simple clouded mind failed to realise the full extent of the sorrow that was looming over the little cottage home.

Annie was now sixteen years old ; her father

had not been home for more than two years, and she was getting tired of her life in that little quiet country village. She wanted amusement and excitement, and she had made up her mind to go to London, and see a little of life ; she had a friend there, a girl named Maggie Dunscombe—not a very good girl, one whose character had not stood very high in the village school, and who had gone away with all her people to live in the great city.

Edgar was an under gardener at the Hall, working very hard, and trying to get on, so that he might be able to help poor dear old Granny a bit, and give her a few extra comforts, now that she was getting so helpless and infirm.

John Lyte was very good in sending home part of his pay, and there was really no need for Annie to go out into the world and earn her own living, as she said she meant to do ; her rightful place was at home, taking care of the failing old woman who loved her so dearly, and who had watched over her childish years so tenderly.

“Annie, Annie, don’t go,” Edgar had said with tears in his blue eyes ; “if it’s money you want to buy some ribbons with, or anything of that kind, I’ll get extra work, of mornings and

evenings, and give you a few shillings, but London is a bad place, Annie, darling, and although I know you are good and strong, and are not likely to go wrong, still I can't bear you to go, and what will father do when he comes back and finds his darling gone from us."

"Father's not likely to be home for at least two years, he as much as said so in his last letter, and by that time I dare say I shall be at Winstanton again, quite rich, and quite a lady. Maggie says it's wonderful how folks make their fortune up in London."

Poor Edgar sighed; little enough did he know of the world's wickedness, but a strange misgiving was in his mind, a fear of he knew not what, which he would not confess even to himself.

Annie was inexorable. "It's for all our sakes that I've made up my mind to go, Edgar; for Granny's, and father's, and yours; what's the good of a strong girl like me, staying here doing nothing?"

"You take care of Granny, Annie."

"Yes; but I've lots of time on my hands, and Mrs. Price will be glad to come in and do it, and it will be a charity to employ her; I will send some money from London to help pay her."

It was wonderful how, whenever Annie had set her heart upon a thing, she always managed to make out, that she was doing it for the sake of others.

Edgar saw that the girl's mind was made up, and that nothing could be done to prevent her going to London ; he had spoken to the Vicar, and the good man had tried to use his influence with the girl.

She had listened to him quite respectfully, and had heard all he had to say, but she had told him that nothing could alter her determination. "I think you can trust me, sir, I am not likely to forget all I have been taught."

The Vicar looked sadly upon the handsome face ; truth to tell he had never trusted Annie Lyte so little as he did at that moment. "God help you, my child," was all he said ; "my prayers shall follow you into your new, self-chosen life."

On that evening when granny sat over the fire, and Annie trimmed the nameless article of dress that was to go upon her head, the parting was drawing very near, only two more days, and the wayward girl was to leave her old home, and the loving hearts that cherished her.

There came a gentle timid knock at the door. Granny did not hear it ; she had put on her

spectacles now, and was reading aloud in the low droning voice that had become habitual to her.

Annie got up quickly, and rather impatiently, to answer the intruder whoever it might be.

"I should have had that bow right in another minute," she mused ; "and it has been such a trouble ; what a bother people are ; some beggar I dare say ; they always are coming at this time of night ; I really have nothing to give, there's not a crust in the house, and the last three pence I have in the world, except the money for my fare *must* go to buy that extra quarter of a yard of ribbon, I can't do without it."

She was right in her conclusions. Granny's cottage stood on the high road, and many a poor wanderer seeing the kindly light, in the little window, used to knock at the door, and ask for a piece of bread and a glass of water.

A woman stood there now, a poor miserable half-starved looking creature with a child in her arms, and she begged for a morsel of food for herself and for her little one.

Annie was very cross at the interruption to her work, as we have already seen ; to do the girl justice, she was not generally as heartless as she was on that night ; perhaps the knowledge

of the wrong she was about to commit, acting in defiance of everybody, made her more than usually illtempered.

"We don't give to beggars," she said ; and the sharp whistling wind came in at the open door and blew the girl's fair hair about her face ; "the workhouse is just beyond, they will take you in there."

There was an expression in the poor creature's eyes that came back to Annie often and often in the sad days that were to come, with bitter, haunting, reproachful memories, but she did not heed that glance of mingled anger and entreaty then ; she closed the door quickly, and it seemed as though something of a curse blended with the piteous moaning sound of the wintry wind, and as she returned to her work, Granny's voice sounded low and strange as she read in her old dreamy way. "And this commandment have we from Him : that he who loveth God, love his brother also ;" to Annie those words too were to come back by-and-by mixed up with the poor woman's reproachful glance, and with the moaning of the wind, and the indistinct curse.

Five minutes passed away, and Edgar came in and stood at the table.

"Annie, I bought you the hymn book," he

said, "and I have written something in it ; it's a part of my favourite Collect—the Collect for the first Sunday after Trinity. I hope you won't mind."

"No, dear, I'm sure I shan't mind anything you like to do," answered Annie, with more than usual softness in her voice ; somehow it had come upon her at that moment that she wished he were going to stay at home with Granny and Edgar.

"It's a beautiful book," she continued, looking admiringly at the violet binding, and the red leaves ; and now let us see the writing ; she opened it and read.

"Annie Lyte, from Edgar.

"And because through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping of Thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed ; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen."

Annie read the words aloud, and then Granny's voice sounded again, reading over the same verse :

"And this commandment have we from Him : that he who loveth God, love his brother also."

Annie looked up into her brother's face to see what he thought of the old woman's somewhat strange manner. He hardly seemed to heed it, he was looking anxious and troubled, and the girl put down her work and laid her hand upon his arm, and said, .

"What is it, Edgar?"

"Nothing, not much, but I have a confession to make, darling ; you know I promised to get you a new silver thimble to-morrow,—I'm very sorry, Annie, but I can't do it."

"Can't do it?—why it was a promise."

"Yes, I know it was, and I was nearly coming home that way to get it to-night, but I was rather late, and only a little way up the road I met a poor woman carrying a little child, and she asked me to help her to get some food ; she was going on to Huxton to see her mother who was dying, and she had not tasted a morsel of anything to-day. I could not help it, Annie, I took her into Hatchard's and gave her a loaf and some milk, and now I have not enough left to buy your thimble; will you forgive me, Annie? The poor thing said she had asked some one for a piece of bread and a glass of water, but it had been refused her. Oh, Annie, my darling, how *can* people be so hard?"

She turned away from him to hide her burning cheeks, but she answered,

"No, I don't mind about the thimble, I can quite well do without it."

And Edgar put his arm round his sister's waist, and kissed her fondly as he said,

"I knew you were too good to mind, darling, I knew you would have given all you had to that poor woman."

The burning blush upon Annie's cheek deepened now; she was nearly going to tell Edgar all, to confess to him how selfish and unkind she had been, and to ask him to pray for her that she might be a better girl; but the old indomitable pride stood in her way, and when she knelt and said her evening prayers, all thought of the sin of which she had been guilty had gone out of her mind.

All too quickly those two days passed away; all too quickly came that last moment when Annie dressed for her journey stood by her grandmother's side waiting to wish her good-bye.

There was a softened look upon the girl's face then, and the tears stood in her eyes as she gazed upon the old loving features which had never worn one cross look for her.

" My dear, my dear, you are like your very like her ; shall I tell her when I Annie,—and I'm sure to see her before think,—that you are a good girl to father Edgar ?"

Words would not come ; it was Ed answered for his sister.

" Yes, of course she's good, Granny de going away for a bit now, and she wan you good-bye,—you'll say good-bye to before she goes on her journey ?"

" Yes, to be sure I will,—good-bye : bless you, my darling, and take you safe journey's end ; and you'll say the sam won't you, Annie ? for I too am goin journey, a very, very long one, and th be darkness before I get to the end there'll be light beyond ; pray for me, you, that I may reach the light, and tha not lose my way."

Annie's arms were thrown round woman's neck now.

" Granny, dear, dear Granny, I wish not made up my mind to leave you ; that I shall see you again."

" Yes, my dear, when our journey is God's mercy we shall meet again."

"Annie," said Edgar, "it is not too late to change your mind."

"Yes it is, Maggie is to meet me at the station, I cannot go from my word, and besides, Edgar, I have told you before it is better for all our sakes that I should go."

She went, and the little cottage home was very dreary for many and many a day to come, and Granny used to talk to the girl as if she were really there, and Edgar prayed always, in church above all, that by the help of God's grace his darling might be kept safe from harm.

Annie wrote very often in those early days, telling of all the wonders she saw, and of all the great things she meant to do. She had managed to find a situation as shop girl in a fashionable confectionery business, where all the young women looked like ladies, far, far grander than any of the Winstanton ladies. She lived with Maggie Inscombe's people, and they were very kind to her, and took her about to see all the sights, and she wondered how she had ever existed in Winstanton for so many years, it was so stupid and so dull. Once she said she had been to church, to the Blessed Sacrament, but that was not very long after she left home, and when

Easter came, and Edgar wrote and said how he had thought of her when very early in the morning he went to meet his Risen LORD at the holy Altar, she took no notice of his loving words, and his heart sank with a strange misgiving.

And then after a time the letters came at longer intervals, and soon they ceased altogether.

Edgar went to the Vicar, and he wrote to the Dunscombes, and Maggie's father answered that both the girls had left the shelter of his roof before Whitsun-tide ; he had tried to trace them, but they were nowhere to be found, the shop-people where they used to work knew nothing about them.

And so the poor sorrowing brother had to bear his burden alone, or rather he took it to the foot of the Cross and laid it there, and asked GOD to help him to be patient in the trouble that had come into his life.

He was thankful sometimes for Granny's blissful ignorance. She still went on talking as if Annie were with them, or if sometimes she missed her she would smile and say,

“The girl has gone to her mother,—better so, far better so.”

And Edgar thought if Granny's words were

ly true, he could have given up his darling unkindly.

One day he stood before the Vicar dressed his Sunday clothes.

"Why, Edgar, where are you going?"

"To London, sir, to see if I can find her. I've been saving up my money for a long time, I've got enough now to take me there and back, I'd stay there a day or two, and to bring her back with me, please GOD."

The good Priest did not like to tell the lad how hopeless he felt as to the success of his young errand. He told him how to set aboutings, and advised him to go both to the Duns-mbes' and to the shop, and so to try and trace the wanderer.

"Thank you, sir; and you will ask GOD to help me."

"I will indeed, Edgar; I have remembered you in my prayers ever since she went away."

Four days afterwards Edgar Lyte was once more at the Vicarage, standing weary and tired in the study.

"Sit down, Edgar, my boy."

And poor Edgar sat down, because he had lost the strength to stand, and said,

"I cannot find her, sir, and there was a letter

waiting for me to say that father would be at home soon after Whitsun-tide, and the news I have to give him will break his heart,—he loved us, both, sir, he's been a good father to both of us, but you don't know what *she* was to him."

And the Vicar could say nothing, because there was nothing to say.

"My poor boy, God will help you."

"Yes, sir, if it were not for that, I think I should die. Here's her last letter, sir ; I always carry it in my pocket ; it's dated more than a year back, and no one has heard a word of her since."

It was a June evening in London, a Sunday evening, when the bells from many a Church pealed forth their summons to the vast crowds who were walking in the quiet streets, and bade them come to God's own House, and thank Him for the many mercies of the day that was past and over, and ask for His gracious protection on the night that was drawing on.

Some listened to the music of the bells, and obeyed it ; some went upon their way, heedless of the voice that called them to put away the world's cares, and the world's pleasures for one short hour, and to give some of that Day of

Rest to Him Who for their sakes rose again
from the dead on the third day.

A girl wandered listlessly on—a poor ragged thing—whose pale face bore traces of some beauty; but the rough unkempt hair hung loosely beneath her battered old bonnet, and she drew her ragged shawl more closely around her, as though the chill evening air sent a shudder through her slight frame.

The bells had ceased now, and as the girl passed a Church she looked up at it with wistful eyes, and then she murmured, “No, no, I cannot go in, I’m not fit for it.”

A little girl passed her, a poor child not much better dressed than herself.

“ You looks tired,” she said, “ come along to Church with me, ‘twill rest you a bit.”

“ Yes, I *am* tired, very very tired.”

“ Then come in,” and the little hand was laid gently upon the girl’s thin arm, in very pity for her evident wretchedness.

And Annie Lyte—for Annie it was—went to the crowded Church.

She did not pay much heed to the service at first,—she was so hungry, so very hungry; she had had nothing to eat all day; she had begged for charity that night, and it had been refused

her ; and one thought was foremost in her mind, the thought of a winter's night nearly eighteen months before, when she had shut the cottage door in the face of that poor woman and her little child.

She knelt down mechanically,—the words of the chanted Psalms sounded strangely familiar, and yet she could not join in them, nor understand them, she was too utterly weary to be capable of the slightest mental effort.

Suddenly her little companion felt her start violently,—it was the first Sunday after Trinity, and clearly and distinctly the words of the collect fell upon Annie's ears, “ Because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping of Thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.”

The poor child could bear it no longer, convulsive sobs shook her frame, and she got up quietly and went out again into the street.

A Sister of Mercy who had been detained on some work of love, and was just hurrying into the Church, stopped at the sight of the miserable looking girl, and gently asked what ailed her.

"Oh, I never said my prayers ; I would not confess to my weakness, I thought I could do all without the help of His grace, and I have fallen, and now there is no help for me—no hope either in this world, nor in the next."

"Hush, hush, my child, come with me."

Sister Miriam did not go to Church that night ; she sat in her own little room, and listened to a sad story—the story of a self-confident nature, which had sunk very low. Annie told everything—beginning at that winter's night, when she had sent the hungry woman away, and then going on to tell of her life of misery and want since she had left her home.

"I wanted to be a lady, Sister, and see what am now, it's only the thought of father, and granney, and Edgar, that has kept me from being even worse. They sent me away from the shop because they accused me of stealing,—it was not true,—but I was too proud to go home ; I had no character, and no friends, and ever since that I've been living as best I could, and now here is nothing left for me but to starve and to die."

Sister Miriam kept Annie at the Home that night, and spoke to her of hope amidst all the darkness, and before the poor weary girl lay

down upon her bed, she had promised to re-
to Winstanton to Granny and to Edgar.

Two days before that Sunday night,
Lyte had returned to his home, to find
mother dying, and his darling child lost.

In the quiet of a June evening the fathe-
son sat by the side of Granny's bed. A
light had come into the old dim eyes :
now Granny saw things more clearly than
had done for a very long time : she knew
trouble had come to the little cottage hom-

"My dears," she said, "in the Epistle for
Sunday the words came, 'Perfect love cast
out fear,'—don't be afraid, John, don't be;
Edgar, she will come home at last."

There was a knock at the door, and a
face that none of them had ever seen
looked in.

"I have brought Annie home," Sister M.
said, "she is very sorry."

"Annie, my darling, I will tell Mary th-
are a good girl."

And old loving Granny closed her eye
died.

There is little more to say. Annie was
ill for a long time, and when once more s-

P, and walked between her father and brother
o Church, every one said they had never seen
uch a change in any one, all her beauty was
One.

"She's the very spit of her mother now," ex-
aimed old Thomas; "but 'tain't as it used to
, the beauty *has* gone, but I think the good-
ess has come in its place."

John Lyte is very happy now, and so is Edgar,
d Annie's whole life is given to others, and
e denies herself in everything, so that she may
fil the command which is the test of love:
That he who loveth GOD, love his brother
o."

And so we too must show our love to GOD ;
s the only way in which we can give back to
m all the tender, loving, ceaseless care He
ishes upon us. Every day He puts into our
y some opportunity of doing good to those
und us,—it may be some very small thing,—
the most part our lives are made up of small
ngs,—it may be only some very trifling ser-
e that it is in our power to render to another,
t may be only some kind, gentle loving word
t He put into our hearts to speak to some

one in sorrow or in suffering,—never mind how trifling the deed or the word is—done, and spoken in His Name, because of all His Love for us, it will bring its own reward ; and angels will carry the record of it to the LORD of all Love Who has said, “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

THE SMUGGLER'S SON.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

"Then marvel not, if such as bask
In purest light of innocence,
Hope against hope, in love's dear task,
Spite of all dark offence ;
If they who hate the trespass most,
Yet, when all other love is lost,
Love the poor sinner, marvel not ;
CHRIST's mark outwears the rankest blot."

"**M**Y lads," said the Rector of Oldworth to his choir boys as they sat before him in the vestry one bright June afternoon, the second Sunday after Trinity it was, "My lads, do you know what the lesson of these two first Sundays after Trinity is?"

The boys did not answer.

"It is as it were the lesson of the command-

ment which our dear LORD gave His Sacred Life to teach us ; surely, my boys, you know what that was which brought Him, the King of Glory, down from heaven?"

" Love," said two or three clear young voices.

" Yes, love, my boys ; perfect love, containing in it no thought of self ; bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things ; both last Sunday and to-day the Epistles are taken from the Epistle of S. John, the Apostle of love ; and we are told that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

" It is a very solemn thought, my lads ; it seems as though our salvation depended upon our kindness and gentleness, and love for each other.

" Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer ; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His Life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

" Yes, in memory of all that marvellous Love which was given for us, we must be willing to live for others, ay, and willing to die for them.

"Do you fully realize this? do you understand what is required of you? perfect self-sacrifice, perfect self-abnegation, thinking always of others first, of ourselves last.

"It is not very often that it comes into the lives of any of us, to have to die for another; in the chronicles of the past we hear of glorious deeds of courage and of chivalry, when men unflinchingly went to their deaths, to save those belonging to them, from the hands of the enemy; and in our own day we find records of daring courage, when bravely and fearlessly in storm and flood, and on the battle-field many a precious life has been saved at the cost of a life lost.

"You will ask me then how we can fulfil the Apostolic precept? how we can show our love to God by laying down our lives for the brethren? Just, my boys, in the same way as I have often told you, we can, one and all of us, be martyrs, and yet these are not the days of martyrdom, we can be ready to make any sacrifice, ready to deny ourselves in everything for the sake of others—always thinking that the smallest or the greatest thing we can do for our neighbours is not really done to them or for them, but for Him Who has said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto

one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

"And one thing more, my lads ; perfect love such as this that S. John enjoins us to give, means perfect forgiveness of any wrong that has been done us ; not one thought of revenge, not one thought of anger must be in our hearts, all must be given up, all laid at His Feet, Who forgave and prayed for His murderers.

"Never mind what injuries we may be smarting under ; the world hated JESUS ; we must not marvel if it hate us, and to suffer with Him patiently here, is to live with Him in glory, through all the great hereafter.

"The Collect, my boys, tells us how we can attain to this state of grace, for its petition to-day is : 'Keep us, we beseech Thee, under the protection of Thy good Providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy Holy Name ; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.'

"Yes ; if we fear and love His Name we shall be safe, for we dare not be unkind to others when we remember all He did for us ; only, dear boys, this fear, and this love must not be transient and evanescent, but '*perpetual*,' ever with us, ever in our minds."

The Rector's words sank deeply into some of those young hearts that afternoon ; some of the Oldworth choristers remembered them through the week, and it made them kinder, and more gentle and forbearing towards their companions ; but some of them, it is to be feared, did not again think of that perpetual love, the memory of which was to be their safeguard, during the difficulties and temptations of their daily lives.

There were two of the elder boys who lingered behind the others when Mr. Warden had dismissed his class, as though they wanted to speak to him ; he had noticed that one of them had looked anxious and troubled whilst he was giving the instruction ; he could generally tell at once when anything was amiss with any of them ; they stood apart now, one at the lich-gate, the other at a grave, which was marked by a plain stone cross.

"Harry, my boy," said the Rector, kindly, speaking to the latter, "do you want me ? is anything amiss with you, or with any of those at home ?"

Harry Morton looked into the kind grave face, and tried to speak, but words failed him for an instant.

"Come, Harry, what is it? you know I have always known all your troubles, and helped you when I could."

"Yes, indeed you have, sir, but you cannot help me now; the trouble is not mine, at least it's nothing I've done."

Mr. Warden looked anxiously at the brave high-spirited youth, whose home he knew was anything but a happy one, and it went to his kind heart to see how wretched and hopeless the boy appeared to be; he pointed to the grave and to the little cross.

"She has been spared the trouble, Harry, whatever it may be."

"Yes, sir; thank God for that; she had had enough to kill her long long ago, and yet she never said one single hard word of anybody. I thought when you were talking this afternoon, sir, that the perpetual love and fear of God's Holy Name, had always been before her;" and as Harry thus spoke of his mother an expression of peace came upon his troubled brow.

"I had better tell you what it is at once, sir," he said, colouring painfully; "father came home last night as bad as ever."

"My poor boy," and the Rector's hearty tone of sympathy seemed to encourage poor Harry to

with his sad tale ; perhaps it will be better to give his whole story in as few words as

orth was situated about a mile and a half eastward, a large fishing village, and Robert, Harry's father, who was a shoemaker by trade for the last few years been associated, as was supposed to be associated with of smugglers who infested the coast.

e had been happiness and brightness in rtons' cottage in the days that now seemed far away, but the husband's conduct had broken the gentle wife's heart, and she ne to her rest one winter's day, charg-
erry, her eldest boy, a lad of not more
urteen years of age, to take care of the
n and to be kind and good to his

o only since his mother's death had Harry words to his father of which he had re- bitterly afterwards. Once only had he led him for all the misery that had come r life during those last few years, and it en the man in his drunken fury struck his helpless little girls.

Harry forgot the promise he had made

his dying mother, and in his just anger at seeing his little sister thus treated he was guilty of great sin of undutifulness and disrespect,—went to the Rector, and told him of his trouble; and since that day the poor boy had been more gentle and dutiful to his father than he had been before.

Now on the afternoon of that Second Sunday after Trinity, when Harry stood at his mother's grave, another and yet greater burden had come into his young life.

"I hardly dare tell you what I think," said the poor lad, when he had told Mr. Walker that his father had come home the night before as bad as ever; "but I can't help it, it's no use, he brought home a great box with him. I know there's tobacco and spirits in it, and I don't know what I ought to do, because of Alice and Mary. You see I'm at work day long, sir, and I am forced to leave them alone a great deal, and if any of the people came to see after these things, it would bring them to death, poor little dears, and I pronounced my mother to take care of them."

"What people do you mean, Harry?"

"The coast-guard people,—there are some of them keeping about Seaforth, no one knows

what for, but it must be to look after the smugglers,—and I'm afraid, sir, I can't help being afraid, that father knows something about them," and as Harry spoke a deep burning blush of shame rose to his cheek.

"You can do nothing until to-morrow, my boy, nothing but what I will do for you, ask God to help you."

"Oh do, sir, I don't know how I could bear things at all if it were not for that."

"And because of *that*, you will bear all things, Harry, my boy; the way is hard, I know, and all looks very dark, but there is brightness beyond, whether the journey be long or short. Is there anything else you have to say to me, Harry?"

The boy's head was bent very low now, and tears that he tried in vain to repress rolled down his cheeks.

"Oh, sir, it's almost harder than anything to have to say it, but please, I think I'd better leave the choir."

"Leave the choir, Harry! why, my dear boy, we couldn't do without you."

"I'm sure, sir, it would be best."

"I can't understand why."

Then with a violent effort poor Harry spoke,

"Sir, coming out of Church this morning I heard some of them—it's of no good mentioning names—calling me 'the smuggler's son.'"

"Harry, my poor boy, they called your LORD and Master by a worse name than that."

"I know they did, sir, I thought all about it, whilst you were talking to us this afternoon. And I don't know that I mind what they say about me, but I couldn't bring discredit on the Church."

"You must leave me to judge of that, Harry," answered Mr. Warden with something of sorrow in his voice; "but should you very much mind telling me who said the words?"

"If you please, sir, I had rather not; if you tell me to do it, of course I must, but indeed, indeed I had much rather not;" but even as Harry spoke, all unconsciously to himself his eyes wandered towards the side gate where five minutes before another of the Oldworth choristers, Ralph Hudson by name had stood, apparently waiting to speak to the Rector.

He was not there now, but that tell-tale glance had revealed much to Mr. Warden, and he sighed something of a weary, disappointed sigh as he thought of the fair promise of Ralph.

Hudson's early years, which somehow or other seemed blighted now.

"Ralph was waiting for me, I thought," he said; "no, Harry, you need not tell me whom you heard speak of you in the way that has pained you so deeply, it is better and fairer not,—at least not now,—but promise me, if you are annoyed on this subject again, you will come to me;—and, my lad, go home now, and try to think of to-day's teaching, and learn the lesson of love."

That evening Robert Morton once more left his home.

"Don't touch that box under the bed, Harry," he said, "and you two little ones, if any one should come in, and ask you whose it is, say it is your brother's,—you mind me."

"Yes, father," and the two little timid frightened girls who were only respectively six and seven years old, looked up into the hard fierce face, that was bent upon them so angrily.

"Father, they cannot tell a lie."

"You just mind your own business, sir;" and a heavy blow fell upon poor Harry's arm.

The little girls began to cry, and then the door was slammed loudly, and the loving brother and his little charges were left alone.

It was a sad evening for Harry ; he could not go to Church, he felt so sick and faint from that cruel blow, and he tried to tell the children some stories, but he failed to rivet their attention, he was so tired and weary.

When night came, and he knelt down to say his prayers, the Rector's words were in his mind. "We must forgive all wrong that has been done us—all must be laid at His Feet, Who forgave and prayed for His murderers."

"It's hard to forgive Ralph," he murmured; "I've never done him an ill turn, and he's so set against me that he will never rest until he gets me out of the choir. I was almost inclined to speak to him this morning, when I heard him call me by that name. And yet I suppose—I am afraid it was true ; but it's harder to hear them speak of *him* than of me, for *her* sake I love him still, because she loved him so dearly, through all, even to the end, and she told me to take care of him and be kind to him."

And what of Ralph Hudson ? He *had* been waiting for the Rector, but he saw him talking earnestly to Harry, and a bad thought came into his mind.

"Mother must give her own message to-morrow," he said to himself ; "it was only something

or other about the washing of the surplices, and the morning will be time enough for that, and I want to hear what that young sneak is saying."

He yielded to the temptation, and running round to the other side of the churchyard, he stood behind a wall, and heard every word that passed between Mr. Warden and Harry.

There was a time when Ralph had loved Harry dearly, but jealousy had entered the boy's heart. Harry's beautiful voice was the cause of all the mischief. Once Ralph had been the head treble ; no one had found out for a long time that Harry could sing at all, and then after he had been taken into the choir the full beauty of the sweet voice came out, and people used to come from miles round to hear the boy sing in the anthem on high festivals.

The sin was unresisted ; the foul black spot spread, unknown to any one but a boy named Tom Withers, not one of the choristers, and the worst lad in all the village. Tom lived in the next cottage to Ralph and his widowed mother ; he was a sharp cute lad, and because on one occasion Harry Morton had detected him in some wild escapade, and had begged him to desist, he had taken a violent hatred to the unoffending boy.

"He'll get too much for any one, if there's such a fuss made about that fine voice of his," Tom Withers had said to Ralph one evening; "how you can bear to have him in the choir, I don't know: I shouldn't have thought it quite the place for a smuggler's son."

The words struck home, as they were meant to strike. From that day Ralph used the weapon against Harry, which Tom had put into his way. The two boys were always together now, and it was the thought of that intimacy which had made the Rector look so grave when, on that bright June afternoon, Harry had glanced towards the lich-gate where Ralph Hudson had stood but a few minutes before.

It was some hours later, when the sun was sinking to his rest behind the distant hills, that Ralph Hudson stood with Tom at the gate of his mother's cottage, and told him what he had heard poor Harry say to Mr. Warden.

"We'll get him out of the choir now, Ralph," had been the answer; "you'll be head swell agair soon."

"How?" Ralph had asked; "I can't do anything wrong, Tom."

"Nobody wants you to;—leave it all to me." Ralph's guardian angel spoke to him then,—

whispered to him in gentle accents of the lesson of love which was the teaching of that Sunday, but the sweet low loving voice was unheeded, and the tempter triumphed.

The next morning Harry washed and dressed the little ones, and then went off to his daily work. "Strength" had come with the "day;" the sad feelings and evil forebodings of the night before had gone from the boy's mind. He was refreshed by the night's rest, and as he lifted the latch of the gate he was whistling almost merrily. It is a part of God's infinite mercy that there are times when He lifts our troubles from us, and speaks to us of hope amid the surrounding gloom.

The boy's employment was at a factory which was situated about half-way between Oldworth and Seaforth, and as he walked along briskly, Tom Withers joined him, and Harry tried to be civil—tried to remember the lesson of love that the Rector had been teaching the choristers the day before. But it was a somewhat difficult task, for he well knew that Withers was Ralph's evil genius, and that it was he who incited the boy to say all those hard bitter things of his father.

"Are you going to the choir practice this evening?" said Tom.

"Yes, I think so," answered poor Harry, feeling, it must be confessed, very uncomfortable. Tom was not usually at all up in the affairs of the choir.

"More fool you," was the reply. "I can't understand how it is that you have not more pride than to allow yourself to be bullied, in the way I heard Hudson bullying you yesterday morning."

"Whose fault was that?" was the answer that rose to Harry's lips; and he clenched his fist, and felt very much inclined to knock his companion down. Then it seemed as though an angel's voice whispered to him, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer;" the next minute, and he had jumped over the hedge, and was running with all his might across the fields, in the direction of the factory.

He was happier than usual all that morning, thankful that he had been kept back from sin, and trying as hard as he could to think kindly of Tom and of Ralph.

Late in the evening, when he reached home, he saw that something unusual had happened: a policeman was pacing up and down in front of

ottage, and a coast-guardsman was standing looking about him.

Then indeed poor Harry's heart sank within

Had disgrace really come to them at -the disgrace which he knew had been the fear of his mother's last days on earth, and h he felt had hastened her end ?

The policeman, a good-hearted fellow, looked passionately at the boy.

"Don't be frightened, my lad, we are not g to do you any harm, we are only watching your father; he's been up to a thing or two e smuggling line, and we have found a box e cottage, with that in it as oughtn't to be :."

"You didn't hurt the little ones, did you?"
said poor Harry, anxiously.

"Not I; I've got little ones of my own at e, and we was as good friends as possible.
I spoke up bravely, poor little maids, and as how father had told them to say the box yours ; but you had said they must not tell ."

Harry went into the room where Alice and
y sat in childish ignorance of evil, looking
picture book. They ran up to him for their
1 kiss, and he was more than usually loving

and gentle to them, as they poured all the day's news into his ear, and both announced their intention of marrying the policeman when they were big girls ; he had given them such lots of lollipops, they said.

Harry went to the choir practice that night he felt he should like to be in Church, like speak to the Rector just for one minute. I heard a titter as he took his place ; he heard some joke about the policeman and the smuggler and the angry feelings all came back for a minute.

The bright June moon was shining in through the east window, lighting up with its soft glow the picture of the Divine Agony ; and as Harry gazed upon it the thought of the Love of Jesus put thoughts of love into his heart, and feelings of anger, and hatred, and all uncharitableness went out of it.

The Rector had heard the news, and he laid his hand upon Harry's head and gave him a blessing, and told him to come to him if he wanted any help, and then the boy went to his dreary home.

The policeman watched Robert Morton's stage for two or three days, and at last he went to Oldworth, for he had received reliable information.

to the effect that the smuggler had taken passage on that evening of the Second Sunday after Trinity, when he left his home, in a bound direct from Seaforth for America, whilst they had been searching for him all the neighbourhood, he was tossing about the wild seas, far out of reach of all pursuit.

The months passed on ; Christmas was very now. Harry still sang in the choir ; and one ever knew how he suffered during that . It was in little ways that Ralph was un- to him, setting the others against him, try- to keep aloof from him, as though he were fit to be associated with, bringing forward old taunt on every possible occasion.

nd Harry bore it all, not in his own strength, could not have done that ; but saying his ers, and kneeling at GOD's Altar, he always embered to ask for help in the hard and ult lesson he had to learn,—the lesson of nt endurance under provocation, of love, in place of hatred.

here were strange rumours afloat in Old- h at this time about Ralph's wildness and eadiness ; there were those who did not ple to say that Tom Withers knew more

about the smugglers than he cared to confess, and Ralph was always with Tom.

There had been a choir practice one night, and Harry's voice had risen sweet and clear in the Christmas anthem : "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see those things which have come to pass." Never had he sung so well ; the choir-master and the Rector had been unable to conceal their delight, and the former had said to Mr. Warden,

"That boy will do great things some day,—I don't know where he may not be singing before very long."

Ere another sun had set the Rector thought of those almost prophetic words, for the great thing had been done, and Harry was singing the Angels' song—where?

You must come with me to Robert Morton's cottage on that same evening. The boy had come home from Church, and was sitting eating his bread and cheese at the table ; Alice and Mary were fast asleep, and not a sound was to be heard but the moaning of the wind and the roaring of the distant sea, for a hurricane was blowing, and Harry was thinking sadly of those in peril on the sea.

Suddenly the door was burst open, and

Ralph's mother stood there with a scared look upon her face.

"Harry," she said, "I know he's been a bad boy to you, Ralph has, but you are good and forgiving, and you will help me now. He came home from the practice this evening looking very cross,—he's often cross now,—and that fellow Tom came after him, and they went off to Seaforth; he wouldn't listen to me when I begged him to bide at home on this fearful night; and John Higgs has just been in, and says that the coast-guardsmen are after them, for Harry, Harry, my boy has gone and got mixed up with them terrible smugglers."

"How can I help you?" said Harry.

"My lad, could you go after him and bring him back,—tell him the danger he's in?"

"Yes, I will go if you will stay here; I'm afraid the wind may waken Alice and Mary, and they would be frightened when they found I was not here."

"God bless you, my lad; I'd go myself if it wasn't for my rheumatics, and besides, he'd only laugh at his poor old mother."

So Harry went out to try and help his enemy. It was a night to terrify even the bravest heart, but no thought of fear was in the boy's mind as

he rushed quickly through the woods, while the branches of the trees creaked and groaned around him, and strange unearthly sounds seemed to fill the air.

At last he reached the beach ; he knew there was a place there called the smuggler's cave, and one autumn night he had seen Tom and Ralph emerging from it. He thought he heard voices sounding above the fury of the waves,—the voices of the coast-guardsmen. If Ralph was in the cave they would find him, and his poor old mother's heart would break.

There was a side path which led to it, a path all overgrown with briars and brushwood, and through these Harry dashed on in the darkness, not heeding that the blood was flowing from his face and hands.

There was a dim light in the cave,—three figures were visible, one was Ralph's.

“Ralph, come to your mother,” said Harry.

“Fire,” said another voice.

There was a pause,—a click, a flash,—and then the loud sharp report of a pistol.

“Oh, Ralph, the coast-guard people are after you,” and as Harry said the words, he fell senseless against the side of the rock ; that shot fired by the smuggler had hit him in the breast, and

hen the coast-guardsmen appeared it was to
nd Ralph kneeling there with Harry's head in
is lap.

"Harry, oh, Harry, speak to me."

"Ralph, go to your mother,—she wants you."

"Harry, forgive me ; *I* did not fire that shot,
was Bill the smuggler ; but it was my fault,
ou came to save me, and I am your murderer,
—oh, Harry, Harry, don't hate me."

And for answer, a smile of unearthly sweetness
me upon the pale face, and Harry whispered,

"Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer."

Again Ralph spoke : "Harry, don't go away,
—stay to sing in Church on Christmas Day."

And then there was another smile, sweeter
than the last, and there sounded through
the smuggler's cave a sweet, strange, unwonted
ing,—like an Angel's voice it was in which the
ing boy sang the words, "Let us now go even
to Bethlehem, and see those things which
we come to pass."

Ere the echoes had died away, he had gone
to see things of which he had dreamed through
the days of his troubled life.

As Widow Hudson sat and watched the little
sleepers, they brought in another sleeper and
id him on his little bed,—but from that sleep

which Harry slept, there would be no awakening on earth.

Smuggler Bill and Tom Withers had made their escape in the darkness, and Ralph was taken before the magistrates, and was dismissed with a warning ; perhaps his haggard, sorrowful face pleaded more strongly than anything else in his favour.

Poor Ralph, all the years of his youth were saddened by the events of that terrible night ; but a change came over him over which surely the angels in heaven rejoiced ; and the Rector said that Harry's death had done its work, for it had saved a soul.

Alice and Mary were put into a Home, where they are very happy. They still talk of Harry in hushed awed whispers, and every Saturday Ralph goes to see them, and takes them some little present which he has bought out of his hardly-earned wages.

LITTLE SALLY'S LAST MESSAGE.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

"There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."

"TAKE care, take care, Jack, indeed he's always watching for us, the Parson said so to-day in Church, and 'tain't right for you to look at them things, for you know we haven't the money to buy them, and you might look so long that you'd end by stealing, Jack, and then what should I do?"

The speaker was a little girl of some ten or eleven years old, a poor ragged dishevelled-looking creature, with a pale face, and great dark eyes, and tangled light hair hanging all over her forehead and down her back. She

was standing in a London street one summer's night,—a very disreputable street indeed, such a place as I dare say many of you who will read this little tale have never seen and seldom heard of,—and yet thousands and thousands of our fellow-creatures spend all their days in such localities, thousands and thousands of those souls for whom JESUS came from His bright Home above, and for whom He died that death of agony upon the Cross, know no other life than this cheerless life in these dismal streets, where it almost seems as if GOD's own sun never shone.

It certainly did not seem as though much brightness had ever come to the little girl whose simple story I am going to tell you ; she looks very much inclined to cry as she lays her poor little thin hand pleadingly upon the arm of a great rough-looking lad who is standing next her, his eyes fixed longingly upon some stale-looking buns and cakes, and some very hard apples, which are exposed for sale on a table outside a small, miserable-looking shop.

Jack's hand is stretched out to help himself ; no one is looking he sees. It is a Sunday night, and every one who can has gone out of Leather Street to get a whiff of fresh air where they can.

Most of the shops, such as they are, are open ; they don't seem to think much of the Day of Rest in Leather Street ; in fact, if it were not for the tinkling of a bell not very far off, and for an announcement stuck up on a board here and there that there will be services at the Mission Chapel at almost every hour of the day during that Sunday, I am not sure that anybody would know that it was not a working day for those poor people.

And then as Jack stretches out his hand, comes little Sally's pleading gesture, and she speaks the words with which my story begins : "Take care, take care, Jack, indeed he's always watching for us, the Parson said so."

Jack started violently.

"Who is he, where is he?" he exclaimed, "and what on earth can the Parson know about it? he ain't here looking at us, he's in Church, I suppose, he's always there, ain't he?"

"No, Jack, you can't see him, you never can ; but come away with me a bit, and I'll tell you about him, and about something else too, about some One Who's always near to help us and take care of us."

Jack gave one more lingering glance at the tempting stall, but he had an idea in his mind

that Sally had seen some one looking at him, and that he had better be careful, so he walked off looking very cross, and asked her to explain herself.

"It's here," answered the child, taking a little Prayer Book out of her old worn pocket; "the girl as sat next me in Church found the place for me, and I turned down the leaf because I wanted to show it to you," and in a very stumbling, stuttering fashion Sally read the words of the Epistle for that Sunday—the Third Sunday after Trinity.

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

"That's him, Jack," she said, when she had closed her book; "the Parson said he walked about just like a big lion, and although we could not see him, he was more dreadful than the biggest lion as ever was, and would do us much more harm."

"Who do you mean, child?" answered Jack, growing more and more impatient.

"The devil," replied Sally, in a frightened tone, "him as is always tempting us to do wrong things; oh, Jack, you've heard about GOD and

he Angels, and there's no fear if we only think of them and ask them to help us ; the thought of them will drive the lion away, the Parson said, but if we forgets them then he will lay hold on us, and it will be very hard to get away, and we shall never get to heaven."

It was a somewhat garbled account of the sermon Sally had heard preached to the children in the little Mission Chapel on that Sunday afternoon, but Jack listened to it, and opened his great round eyes wonderingly, and seemed anxious to hear a little more.

There was one soft tender spot in all Jack's rough heart, and that spot was given to his little sister Sally. He didn't mind what she said to him, he would fire up if any one else dared to find fault with him, but when she spoke he generally listened, even though he did not always do as she wished afterwards.

He had even consented to go with her to some of those Mission Services, which she, poor little thing, had learned to love so well. I don't think she could have told you why she went there at first, unless it might have been that she could have said, that her own poor home was very dreary, and that the little Chapel was lighted and warm, and the music sounded strangely

beautiful to ears which were unaccustomed to anything half as sweet.

We know better than she did in those early days when she began to go to God's House what it was that took her there,—that it was the grace of God's Holy Spirit working in the heart of His own little baptised child, drawing her by the gentle cords of love into the fold of which she had been made one of the Good Shepherd's own little lambs.

For Sally and her brothers, (she had two more at home besides Jack,) had been baptised; their father and mother had taken them all to Church when they were little babies, and the sign of JESUS had been signed upon their foreheads, and they had been made members of CHRIST, children of GOD, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Their father was dead now, and their mother was very hard and unmerciful to them all. She was a lazy, indolent woman, who did not care to work, and the boys picked up a living as best they could, and Sally went out into the street selling boot-laces and pins and needles, and when she got home of an evening she used to toil up and down stairs with pails of water for the neighbours, and huge scuttles of coals, unde-

the weight of which her poor little thin body was bent nearly double ; but she managed to get a few odd pence by this extra work, and it was always such a pleasure to the little unselfish child to get something nice for the boys' supper when they came home at night.

And the heartless mother let the girl work on, and did not seem to heed that each day she grew paler and thinner, and that that little sharp, hard cough which had begun in the winter, did not get one bit better when the bright summer days came.

Jack used to ask her sometimes if it hurt her to cough, and Sally would smile brightly, and answer, "No, not much ; only just a catch like, in my breath."

The catch was very bad on that Sunday night, as Sally told Jack about the roaring lion. Perhaps it was that that made the boy so strangely gentle with her, after he had got over his momentary irritation at not being allowed to "crib" a cake or an apple.

"Tell me something about the Angels, Sally," he said ; "about them as help us to be good. Do you know, I think they've made you a good little one—you've changed a great deal since you went so much to the Chapel, Sally."

"Have I, Jack? I've tried to be good, and I knows what it is as has made me more patient and taught me to bear things better. It's the thought that the suffering is all sent to make us better. The Parson said that too, this afternoon, we must suffer because JESUS suffered, and so no pain is hard when we think of that;" and as Sally spoke she put her little hand to her side, as though "a catch" had come, and looked up into Jack's face, and smiled reassuringly.

"Will you come along with me to the Chapel now, Jack?"

He was not inclined for it that night; he wanted to go for a walk out towards the river, and he told her so. But she pleaded very earnestly that he would change his mind, and so the brother and sister went on together to the little, quiet, simple Chapel, where poor Sally had learned how to bear the many burdens that came into her life.

Jack did not seem very much impressed with the service. He yawned and gaped, and beat time to the music with his feet, and once he said he thought he should go home; but Sally looked as if she were going to cry, and begged him to stay, and he stayed, and listened to the plain

earnest sermon which was preached to those poor people.

Something of the same words were spoken as Sally had heard at the children's service, and Jack liked them because they were so plain, and because he could understand them.

" You are all of you tempted every day, my friends," said the preacher, " and it is only by GOD's help you can overcome your temptations. The roaring lion is ever about your path, but GOD's Angels are stronger than he is ; if you will think of GOD and of JESUS, and ask the HOLY SPIRIT to watch over you and help you, you will be safe. The Epistle for this Sunday tells us to be sober and vigilant : that means, always on the alert, always on the watch, like soldiers who are waiting for the enemy, and know not when he will attack them. My friends, life is hard for you, I know it is—it was hard for JESUS. Look at Him hanging there upon the Cross for you : bleeding, suffering, dying for your sakes, the knowledge of all the sins that men, and women, and children would go on committing until the end of the world, making that cruel death harder to bear.

" GOD has called us to His eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS. These are the words of the

Bible—this is the teaching of this Third Sunday after Trinity, and we are told that after we have suffered for a while, He will make us perfect—that is, fit to dwell with Him in heaven.

“And the Gospel for to-day tells us that there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Oh, my friends, think of this,—think that when the devil tempts you to do a wrong thing, and in the strength and power of God you resist him, then the bright Angels in heaven sing a glad song of joy because of your victory.”

“Sally,” said Jack, when the brother and sister came out of the Chapel, and once more were walking through the now crowded streets, “Sally, do you think the Angels would be glad, if I tried to be good—as good as you are, Sally?”

“Oh Jack, dear Jack, I knows they would, because the Bible says so, and Bible words is always true, you know; but indeed, *I ain't good*—oh how I wish I was.”

For answer Jack gave his little sister a rough kiss, and when she looked into his face, she thought she saw tears in his eyes, and wondered what on earth had made Jack cry. She had never seen him do such a thing before, no not

when mother beat him ever so hard, when he was quite a little chap.

They did not speak again until they reached home—such a home as it was, up five pairs of stairs, and when you did get to the top, wretched and dingy and dirty in the extreme, was the little room where Sally and Jack and their mother and two little brothers were.

Not a gleam of brightness ever came there. The warm sun had shone upon God's earth on that bright June day, but no ray of gladdening warmth had come to cheer and enliven that poor room.

The mother sat there, looking as usual ill-tempered and discontented.

"Where have you been, children?"

"To Church, mother."

"To Church; what for, I should like to know?"

"To learn to be good," answered Sally. "Oh, mother, I wish we was all good."

"You do, do you, miss? speak for yourself, please; I does very well as I is, and so do Joey, and Mike—don't we, boys?"

"Yes," replied two small voices from a dark corner; "the Parson wants to catch hold of us, but we won't go. Why did *you* go, Jack?"

"Because I chose," answered Jack, sulkily.

And then Joey and Mike set up a mocking laugh, and poor Jack's temper, which was none of the sweetest, could not stand it. He administered a sound box on the ears to each of the delinquents, and sent them howling back to their dark corner.

Such scenes were of frequent occurrence in that wretched home. There was a time, not so very long ago, either, when Sally had been foremost amongst the combatants, and fought bravely for what she considered her rights ; but things had changed since she began going to the little Mission Chapel, and now she stood apart, and sobbed as though her poor little heart would break.

Her mother bade her cease making that row, but Jack, feeling somewhat ashamed of himself, went up and put his arm round her, and dragged her down to the floor. There were no chairs in the miserable attic, but the three-legged one, which was at that moment occupied by the mistress of the apartment.

"Why are you crying, Sally, my girl?" said the boy.

But Sally did not answer, and Jack sat down by her side, and tried to comfort her, and at

last she looked up through the blinding mist of tears, and said,

"Oh, Jack, he was near you then, when you struck Joey and Mike, and the angels were sorry, Jack, and JESUS was sorry, and that's why I'm crying—because they are so good to us, we ought to be good to them ; you'll try, won't you, dear Jack ?"

Sally had, all unconsciously to herself, somewhat raised her tones, and the small boys in the corner had heard her remarks, and greeted them with another peal of mocking laughter.

"Sally's turned Methody," exclaimed Joey ; "what a lark, and Jack's going to turn one too."

Again Jack started to his feet ; again he was going to administer speedy chastisement to the offenders, when Sally speaking in a whisper now said,

"Oh, Jack, think of the Angels now, think of all JESUS bore for us."

And Jack did not answer, but put his old hat upon his head, and walked out of the room.

It would be a very good thing if some of us when we are put out would follow that poor ignorant boy's example, and just go away from the thing or the person that irritates us,—a minute's quiet, a minute's reflection, a short

time in which to say one little prayer, and the whole current of our thought is changed, and we can almost laugh, at what made us so angry a short time before.

It was late before Jack came home ; his mother and the two younger boys were snoring loudly when he entered the room gently, thinking of little Sally, and not wishing to awaken her. But in the moonlight he saw the eager eyes fixed upon him, and he heard the short cough which told him that his sister was awake ; he went up and knelt down by her side.

"Where have you been, Jack ? not with them bad boys in the yard, have you ?"

"No, I haven't seen one of them ; I've been a-speaking to your parson, Sally."

"To my parson, the parson of the Mission Chapel ? why, Jack, I've never spoke to him in my life."

"No, I knows you haven't, but I've told him about you to-night, and he wants to see you."

"Oh, Jack !"

"Yes, he do ; I told him a lot, I couldn't help it, he spoke to me so kind ; I was a-standing all alone in the street, and a woman came by,—a poor looking thing all dressed in fine clothes that was very dirty ; she had had a drop

o much, and she couldn't walk very straight,
d there was a lot of men and women passing
and down, and all they did was to jeer at
her, and mock her ; and then your parson comed
ut of the house at the corner, where all the
ildren has the fever, and he went up to the
or thing and spoke quite kind to her, just as
nd as he would have spoke to any lady, and
he took her by the arm, and tried to get her
ong, but he couldn't manage it, and I went
and gived him a helping hand, and we took
her to her home,—the parson knowed where it
as, and as we was coming home, he said he
ought he had seen me at the chapel, and so I
ld him all about you, Sally, and how good the
apel had made you, and—and—" and poor
ick coloured crimson, " and I told him as how
was shocking bad, and how the roaring lion
as always after me, and then he spoke to me
omething like he spoke to the people to-night,
id, Sally, you and me is to go to Sunday
chool next Sunday."

" We can't," answered Sally, " we've no clothes;
don't mind going to the chapel, because I sits
ght away in a corner, and no one sees me, but
knows how the children would laugh at me
in the school,—I've heard that they does."

"It don't matter," said Jack, a boy's careless as to externals coming out in contrast to the poor little woman's vanity ; "it don't matter a bit, let them laugh if they likes,—I'll fight them if they does."

"No, no, Jack, you won't do that ; yes, I'll go next Sunday ; I'll try not to think about my clothes, I'll furbish up my old hat a bit, and you can put a stitch into my shoes."

So it was settled, and Jack lay down on his heap of straw in the corner, and was soon fast asleep, but Sally coughed, and coughed, until the morning light stole into the room, and then her mother when she had had only two or three hours' unrefreshing sleep, called her to get up, and make the boys' breakfast for them, and the ever willing little patient maiden rose without a murmur and began her daily duties.

A strange new happiness however had come to her, making everything look very bright on that Monday morning,—Jack, her dear darling brother, who was so good to her, had seen the parson, and somehow it seemed as though ever so great a good was to follow that interview.

And good did come,—not all at once, not very suddenly, only to be seen in little ways,

which perhaps no one but loving little Sally would have noticed.

Jack still swore, and still beat the little ones sometimes, and even once or twice he had been tempted to steal, as he had done in the old days, but when he had thus acted he was very, very sorry, and tried for two or three days to go on better, and then perhaps the old temptations came to him, and there was another fall ; and so the time passed on, made up of falls, and struggles, and rare victories, and yet Sally could be thankful for very much that was different now to what it had been in the old days before that Third Sunday after Trinity.

Every Sunday the boy and girl went to the Sunday School, and were taught their duty to God and to man ; every Sunday too Sally was at the Mission Services, and Jack was often with her,—not always, sometimes he preferred a day in the country, or a row on the river, with some of his friends.

Those were sad days for little Sally ; but the good priest had told her that she must be patient, and pray for Jack, and for all she loved ; and so she went on, trusting and hoping that in the end all would be well.

You see this is a true story ; now in good

little books which I read sometimes, it is very wonderful how the people get good all in very short time, without any trouble or any difficulty whatever. Now this always strikes me as being very unreal,—the road to Heaven is very steep and very hard, and we have to fight and battle on to the end,—not sit down and say we are all right,—we know that JESUS died for us, and so we are saved ;—all this is very true, JESUS did die for us, all praise to His infinite Mercy ; but He did more than this, He lived for us—lived to show us how to live,—and all His life was given to be our Pattern. We must be like JESUS, we must hate sin, and be sorry for all that grieves the HOLY SPIRIT ; and if we could do all this at once, it would hardly be a good thing for us, we should grow self-confident, and self-satisfied, and be in danger of failure, because we thought we were sure of the prize. Of course it is easier for some people to be good than it is for others,—little Sally's was a gentle, loving nature, and to her it was less difficult to fight against sin, than it was to poor passionate Jack ; and yet in spite of all his failures the boy was happier than he had ever been in all his life before.

It was a hard, cold, dreary winter, that came

after that summer of which we have been writing ; old people said they never remembered to have seen such an one, or if they had, it was years and years ago, when they were very young.

Work was very scarce just after Christmas ; the shoemaker for whom Jack worked was obliged to dismiss some of his hands, and amongst them our poor boy, and Sally said she didn't know what had come to the people, but they wouldn't buy neither boot-laces nor pins. And the mother was as lazy as ever, and the two little boys were too little, really to do much, even if they could have managed to find any work, and so there was pinching poverty and want in that poor attic.

Sally toiled harder than ever amongst the neighbours, fetching and carrying, and bending herself double, as she bore her heavy burdens along. Those about her, at least those in the neighbourhood looked at the poor little thing with something of pity, and said to each other that she had not very long to live, she grew thinner and paler, and weaker every day.

Even now she never complained, and when her Sunday School teacher, or the Mission Priest, asked her what ailed her, she said, "Nothing at

all, I'm very well, thank you, it's only the catch as is in my side ; it will go away when the summer comes."

The summer *did* come ; things looked a little brighter now ; Jack went back to his work at the shoemaker's, and the sale for boot-laces and pins was on the increase, and all through the bright May days, the little pale girl would pace the streets, and offer her small wares to the passers by.

Jack was kinder to her than ever now, and oh, he was so good, she told the Priest, it was more than a month since he had said one cross word to mother or "banged" the boys, and the night before she had had a dream, a beautiful dream, she thought she heard the Angels say they were so glad that Jack was a good boy.

And now it was June, the London season was at its height, the heat was somewhat unusual for the time of year, and one day Sally, more than usually tired and worn out, sat down on the steps of a large building and fell fast asleep.

When she awoke she was lying in a little white bed in a hospital ward. She had fainted, poor little maid, and kindly arms had carried her tenderly, and laid her there to die.

"My tray, oh, my tray, where is it? I had
such a lot of laces, and pins, and now they're all
gone; oh, please give them back to me."

A voice sweeter than any poor Sally had ever
heard answered, "My child, they are all right;
you shall have them when you want them."

"Thank you; please tell me who you are?"

A smile was upon the sweet gentle face.

"Call me Sister Ruth, my child."

"Sister Ruth!" and Sally repeated the name
wonderingly; "are you really *my* sister? will you
ss me, please?"

The kiss was given, and the Sister answered
easily, "Yes, I *am* your sister, because of the
ve of our elder Brother."

"Of who?" asked Sally.

"Of JESUS, our own Blessed LORD; for His
ake, my little one, I am your sister."

"Please, Sister Ruth, I wants Jack."

"Who is Jack?"

"My brother, my own brother."

"Is he all you have?"

"Yes, no, there's mother, and the two little
boys, Joey and Mike."

"Should you not like them to come and see
ou?"

"Thank you; it don't much matter so long

as Jack comes ;" that was her one thought, her one yearning wish, to see Jack again.

Sister Ruth sent for him, and then she sat down by the child's side and listened to her laboured breathing, and read to her at intervals, out of a little book of hymns ; but Sally did not seem to heed what she said ; her large lustrous eyes were fixed upon the door.

" He must come in that way, mustn't he ?" she said.

" Yes, my child ; there is no other entrance to the ward."

In the evening, just as the sun was sinking to his rest, Jack came ; Sister Ruth saw it first in Sally's eyes, in the look of joy unutterable that came and lit them up with such a loving light.

" Sally, my little Sally."

" Oh, Jack, I'm so glad, so thankful."

That was all they said to each other. And then the boy sat with his hand in his little sister's and looked into her face, as though he would fain impress it upon his memory for ever.

" Jack, darling," she said at last, " are they all well at home ?"

" Yes ; they sent you their love. Mother most came along of me, but she was very tired, and she will come to-morrow."

"To-morrow ! Sister Ruth, will to-morrow ever come ? Jack, dear, I don't think it will."

"Yes, Sally, of course it will ; you're dreaming, my little one."

"No, I ain't ; I'm wide awake. No, no, to-morrow will not come to me, Jack ; so I had best send them a message ; will you tell them, tell mother and Joey, and Mike, that Sally as has gone away because she was so tired, sends them her best love, and she's sorry for all the bad things as she has ever done ? and will you tell them about the roaring lion, and about JESUS and the Angels, and ask them for my sake to go, come Sunday, to the Mission Chapel ? may be, Jack, the Angels would be glad if they'd go."

"Sally, dear Sally, don't go away."

"I'm tired, Jack, and the Parson said no one was tired there—where I'm a-going ; good-bye, Jack. I loved you better than any one, and I'll look out for you and wait for you ; is it Sunday yet ? it feels like it, and I loves Sundays."

They were the last words Sally ever spoke. Sister Ruth drew Jack away, and told him that the suffering life was over, and sent the poor heart-broken fellow home, with the child's last message.

Very simply he gave it ; and when four days

afterwards he stood with Sister Ruth at Sally's grave he said, "They're coming along of me to the Chapel next Sunday because of Sally's last message."

They went ; and in time they learned to know why it was that Sally had begged them to go there ; a new joy, and a new peace came into that wretched attic where poor Sally had lived.

It was years afterwards that Jack and his mother stood by the side of the pure white cross that Sister Ruth had put up to the child's memory ; and then the latter said, "Oh, Jack, it was her last message as made me think of all my past life ; may be she's sharing now in the Angels' joy."

THE MOTE AND THE BEAM.

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

“Oh, wad some fay the giftie gie us,
To see oursel’s as others see us.”

“WELL, I don’t think I ever saw such a thing as that, did you, Lottie?”

“As what?” answered the girl thus addressed ; “I was not looking, and I did not see anything particular, Maggie.”

The speakers, two maidens of about fifteen years old, were standing at the gate of a little cottage in the one long straggling street of Earnscliff,—and Earnscliff, be it known, was the quaintest little town it was possible to see.

Don’t look for it in the railway guide, for you’ll not find it there, and a search on the map

would be equally fruitless, as for some reason best known to geographers, Earnscliff has not been deemed worthy of a small dot, and a few almost illegible letters, to prove its existence as an English town.

This is however a digression ; let us return to the two girls at the cottage gate.

They are both tidy looking maidens, with an unmistakable well-to-do air about them. You can see at a glance that although their station in life may be humble, poverty and want have not left their cruel marks upon either Lottie or Maggie ; in truth they both look as if they did not know what care meant.

They had been next door neighbours and friends from their earliest childhood ; they each had a loving father and mother, and a whole herd of little brothers and sisters, and they had both been brought up at the village school, and had acquitted themselves very creditably there ; and now they were both at home, Lottie Price helping her mother, who was the principal, indeed the only dressmaker in Earnscliff, and Maggie Stanton being apprenticed to a milliner in the little town.

It was a bright June evening on which my story begins ; the day's work was done, a sweet

peace and calm seemed to have fallen upon all around, and the sun was sinking gently to its rest behind the hills, to rise again on the morrow and bring with it light, and life, and heat,—a sure and certain pledge of that Resurrection of the body, in which day by day we express our belief. For we too shall sink to our rest, and we too through GOD's mercy shall rise again, even as the Sun of Righteousness, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, rose for us men, and for our salvation, with healing in His wings.

Through the still air there sounded the soft sweet music of the Church bell, calling the people of Earnscliff to thank God for the blessings of the day that was past and over, and to ask Him to lighten their darkness and to keep them safe from all the perils and dangers of the night.

"Go and get your hat, Maggie," said Lottie, "or we shall be late; that is the last bell."

But Maggie's eyes were following a retreating figure down the street, and she repeated the words with which our story opens: "Well, I don't think I ever saw such a thing as that, did you, Lottie?"

And now, Lottie, who had been gazing dreamily at the gorgeous hues of the setting

sun, turned away and looked down the street in the same direction as Maggie was looking.

What she saw there was after all nothing very wonderful,—only a girl about her own age, a very untidy, slovenly looking little thing, with her stockings hanging loosely about her legs, and her hair straggling in wild confusion from beneath her old straw hat ; her arms were bare, her dress ragged, her whole appearance uncared for.

A smile was on Lottie's sweet face as she gazed after the girl until she turned quickly round a corner, and she said in a quiet voice, very unlike Maggie's eager, excited tones,

"I don't see that she looks one bit different to what she always does, Maggie ; poor Rhoda, you know I cannot help liking her in spite of all her untidy ways, and we ought not to be hard upon her, dear, she's never had a mother like we have to look after her and care for her."

"I wasn't thinking of her untidiness when I spoke," answered Maggie, with something of scorn in her voice ; "one is too used to that to notice it much ; but it *is* strange why just every evening, when it's getting dark, she goes to the very place the Vicar has told us not to go to,—

I mean the rooms where the singing and dancing are,—she's gone there now ; I saw her with my own eyes last night coming out from there about eleven o'clock. I was walking with father ; we had been over to see Aunt Betsy, and we came home late, and she saw me, and oh, didn't she skurry on and hold down her head as if she was ashamed of herself, which of course she ought to have been."

"Hush, hush, Maggie, you always are unkind to Rhoda."

Maggie tossed her pretty head impetuously.

"I don't see that I am ; I have tried to be kind to her ever so often, but she never will stop and speak, she's always in a hurry, always bustling and skurrying on. I can't see what there is in her to make such a fuss about, I actually saw Miss Harper kiss her the other day,—fancy kissing that dirty face, Lottie."

"Her face isn't dirty," answered Lottie ; "she is untidy, I know, but *that's* not true, Maggie, and you don't know half the troubles that she has to bear ; I don't think anybody does, unless may be it's the Vicar and Miss Harper. I know once when I had been naughty long, long ago, and Miss Harper had to scold me for it, she spoke ever so kindly, and then she kissed me,

and do you know, Maggie, I think the kiss did me more good than the scolding."

All this time the Church bell had been ringing, but Maggie made no sign of any intention of going to put on her hat, and at last Lottie said she could not wait for her any longer, and went off by herself, whilst Maggie stood gazing up and down the street, and wondering whether Rhoda Norris would come back, or whether she was really going to the Rose and Crown, and would not return home until eleven o'clock, as she had done the night before.

"It's very odd," mused the girl, "very odd indeed; I don't think if the Vicar and Miss Harper knew it, that they would have anything at all to say to her."

Now Miss Harper was the Vicar's sister, and had kept house for him ever since he was ordained, a period of some forty years. She was a dear old lady with silvery white hair and a pretty pink colour on her sweet face; and she was as good as she was pretty, always ready to weep with those that wept, and to rejoice with those that rejoiced; seeming to understand all the old women's troubles better than anybody, ay, and the old men's too for that matter; and yet the trusted confidante of youth and maidens

and little children in all their pleasures and all their troubles.

She loved all young people dearly ; perhaps had you asked her which of all the Earnscliff girls was her favourite, she would have told you that it was the one into whose life no spark of outward joy ever came, that her loving old heart went out in all its ever-ready sympathy.

Poor Rhoda Norris, we will briefly tell her story here.

She had not known a mother's loving care since she was six years old. Amongst her far-away recollections there would come the remembrance of a gentle face that used to bend over her when she lay in her little bed at night, and murmur some sweet words of blessing and of prayer ; and then there came a day when she saw that same face lying all white and still upon the pillow, when her father cried very much, and the neighbours told her that her mother was dead.

A year passed away, and then Tom Norris brought home another wife, and in three years more, she too was laid in the churchyard, and Rhoda at ten years old had to leave school and be her father's housekeeper and nurse to the two little ones who were left like herself, motherless.

Her step-mother had been very kind to her in her own fashion. The greatest troubles that had ever come to the poor little girl during those three years had arisen from her excessive untidiness and carelessness. Never mind whether it was at home or at school, it was always the same, it seemed impossible to her to keep her shoe-strings tied or her dress fastened ; strings and hooks always, according to Rhoda's account, "broke of themselves," and dear old Miss Harper in her loving indulgence, although it was her constant struggle to make Rhoda neat and tidy, felt inclined to think that such must really be the case, and that Rhoda's strings and hooks were of a less durable nature than any one else's.

It was a hard life that the little child of ten years old led, after her step-mother died. John Norris was not a very steady character ; he worked in some mines not very far away from Earnscliff, and he used to have his breakfast at five in the morning, and not come home until nine at night for his supper, and sometimes then he would have had a drop too much, and many a heavy blow fell upon poor little Rhoda's shoulders if she did not happen to have provided just what he wanted.

She bore it all, and never complained, and tried very hard to please him ; she was a loyal little maiden, in spite of all those untidy ways of hers, and she never even told Mr. or Miss Harper half that she had to endure.

And she was so good to the little ones, so tender and gentle to them, especially to Alick, the younger of the two,—a poor little sickly fellow, whose little limbs refused to support him, and who had to lie on his little bed all day, and sometimes be carried out by Rhoda into the warm bright sunshine.

The little girl's nature was a strangely reserved one, and as the years passed on she lived her lonely little life in the old tumble-down cottage which stood on the outskirts of the town, and the Earnscliff folks saw less and less of her, and some of them began to ignore the fact of her existence, and were only reminded of it when sometimes they saw the poor girl walking through the street, looking very ragged and uncared for, holding little Jim by the hand, and carrying Alick in her arms.

Lottie Price and Maggie Stanton, and Rhoda, had been great friends when they were quite little girls at school ; since that they had not seen very much of her, except when she ap-

peared at Church on Sundays, sitting right down at the west end—Jim and Alick with her ; for of course she was never able to leave them, so she sometimes provided herself with cakes and sweets for the poor little fellows, and Rhoda used to look forward to two or three minutes' talk with the pretty trim looking Lottie, as one of the brightest spots in all her life. She sometimes used to wish Maggie would speak kindly to her, for Rhoda had loved Maggie very dearly in the old days ; but somehow Maggie did not seem inclined to notice her old schoolfellow, and a crimson blush would rise to the little pale face when the other girl used to pass her with just a little nod of recognition.

Once Maggie had saved Rhoda's life,—the latter had always been a dreamy, absent child, and one day in years gone by she was walking to school, not thinking of where she was going, and a horseman passed along the road, mounted on a fiery steed which he could not control ; he called loudly to the little girl to get out of the way, but she neither heard nor heeded his warning voice ; and she would have been knocked down by the spirited animal, had not Maggie rushed bravely forward, and dragged her almost from beneath his hoofs.

Rhoda had never forgotten this,—never had she knelt to say her prayers, without thanking God for allowing Maggie to save her life,—and the deep bond of gratitude which bound her to the girl was not to be broken by Maggie's hard cruel treatment of herself.

Things were getting worse and worse in Tom Norris's cottage ; Alick grew more and more ailing, and the wretched father used to come home more and more intoxicated, and Rhoda did not know how to provide bread for the poor little ones, or to satisfy her father's cravings for food when he came home.

Mr. and Miss Harper were very kind, but there were many claims upon their purse, and the living was a very poor one, very insufficient to the needs of the population, and so it was really little that the good Vicar and his sister could do for one family, when so many wanted help.

Poor Alick's dinner was generally sent from the vicarage table ; "if it hadn't been for that, ma'am, he would have been dead long ago," Rhoda would sometimes say to Miss Harper, "it's only that that have kept him alive."

One afternoon about a fortnight before our story commences, Rhoda and Jim and Alick had appeared at the vicarage.

"My dear, what is the matter?" said good old Miss Harper, looking into the poor patient suffering face.

"Nothing, ma'am, thank you, least-a-ways nothing particular."

"If you please, ma'am, she've been crying all day," said Jim, a fine little fellow, who throwed no one knew how, in that home atmosphere of poverty and want.

"Hush, hush, Jim."

"I won't hush," answered the little boy; "I'll tell the lady how father beat you last night when you asked him for some money to buy bread; I was awake I was, and I heard it all; and when I'm a man, won't I beat him for beating my Rhoda?" and the little sturdy arm was thrown lovingly round his sister's waist, with a would-be air of protection that was half comical, half touching.

Miss Harper turned away, and looked out of the window, although she did try to echo Rhoda's repeated "Hush, Jim, hush."

"Well, my dear, what can I do for you?" said the Vicar's sister at last.

Rhoda looked at her little charges, as though she wanted to get rid of them.

"Ah, I understand," muttered Miss Harper;

"come along, Jim, and sit on the lawn, and make daisy chains for Alick, and I will give you some biscuits."

Of course Jim was delighted, and so was poor little Alick ; and there they sat as happy as little kings ; whilst Miss Harper led Rhoda to a summer-house, and made her sit down by her side and tell her tale.

It was a very short one, only the girl said that things could not go on as they were doing now, and she must work and earn some money.

Miss Harper quite understood the necessity, but how was it to be done ? how was Alick to be left all day, whilst Rhoda went to work, even granting that she could get anything to do ?

And then Rhoda, her poor little face all burning with confusion, told what it was that had brought her to see the Vicar and Miss Harper that day : Mrs. Brown at the Rose and Crown wanted a girl to wash up at night at the busy time, from nine till eleven ; and she would leave the little ones safe in bed, and set father's supper for him, and it would be all right,—sometimes perhaps she might have to go at eight o'clock, but that would not be often,—and everything was quite easy, only she knew that the good

priest and his sister did not approve of the Rose and Crown ; she knew too that it was a bad place, and yet it was all she could do to take it, and so keep the little ones and herself from starving ; " and if you please, ma'am," said poor Rhoda, " I will say my prayers, and ask God to help me ; and since the winter, and my Confirmation and first Communion, things has been easier to bear than they was before."

I don't know what Maggie Stanton would have said had she been able to take a peep into the arbour just then ; for Miss Harper stooped down and kissed Rhoda affectionately ; her loving old heart bled for the poor lonely neglected girl. And yet with it all there was a feeling of thankfulness, that amidst the troubles and difficulties of her young life, the child would turn to the only true help and comfort.

" I will talk to the Vicar about it when he comes home, my dear, and you shall hear what he thinks about it all in the morning."

" Thank you, ma'am, I promised to give Mrs. Brown the answer some time to-morrow," and again Miss Harper turned away to hide those tell-tale tears that somehow or other she never could keep back ; for poor Rhoda looked very unfit to undertake any work, which would in-

volve late hours, and deprive her of the little sleep she was able to get.

You can guess the Vicar's decision; after much thought he came to the conclusion that Rhoda must go to the Rose and Crown.

"I am not afraid for her," he said to his sister; "the little loyal heart will keep loyal through it all—loyal to God and the right."

It was the Sunday after the conversation that had taken place between Lottie and Maggie at the cottage-gate, and the girls of Earnscliff Sunday School had assembled in the class-room, waiting for Miss Harper to come and give them their usual afternoon lesson.

They were always called the old girls by their companions; they had all been confirmed and were communicants, but the link between them and the Vicar's sister was kept up by those Sunday teachings which they all liked so much.

They were talking loud and fast—as is the fashion with most girls when they get together, (not a very good fashion, I think, but I am not going to lecture about that here, or my story would stand a poor chance of being finished,)—and Maggie Stanton's clear young voice was loudest amongst them all.

"I tell you she is out late every night, I saw her coming home last night, when I was looking out of my bedroom window."

"You were watching, oh, Maggie!"

"I tell you I was only—," but Maggie's explanation was put a stop to by Miss Harper's entrance, and although she greeted "the old girls" with her usual sweet smile as they rose to welcome her, Lottie Price could not help thinking that there was something of a troubled expression upon the dear old face.

"My girls," she said, "I am going to read you one of Dr. Neale's beautiful stories; but before I begin it, I want to say a word or two about to-day's teaching. I always think the lesson that this Fourth Sunday after Trinity brings is full of encouragement and of warning to us. In the Collect we acknowledge that without GOD nothing is strong, nothing is holy, and we ask that, He being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. And so safe under His protection, we can bear and act and suffer, taking as our consolation the words of S. Paul which are in the Epistle for the day; the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed

in us. Yes, my children, if we suffer patiently in this world, great indeed will be our blessedness in the world to come.

“ But it is about the Gospel for this Fourth Sunday after Trinity that I specially want to speak to you to-day. My dears, do you all obey the command of JESUS? are you merciful and loving? do you keep from judging others? do you forgive as you hope to be forgiven? I think that all of you would be merciful. I think if you knew that any one was in sorrow or sickness, you would go to them, and do your best for them. I think if any one had injured you, you would forgive the injury. I would not wrong one of you, by supposing that it could be otherwise; but that second command which JESUS has left is hard to keep, ‘ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.’

“ My dear girls, we are always judging each other; we are always just looking at the outside, and knowing very little of the inner life of those around us; and we wonder why they do things which look very odd to us, simply because we do not know *why* they do them; and the wonder ends in suspicion, and the suspicion in harsh uncharitable judgments: sometimes in unscrup-

pulous condemnation. We cannot know the motives of people's actions. Our own loved poet has said :

'Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reason why we smile or sigh.'

And if such be the case—if our nearest and dearest cannot fathom our thoughts—how *can* we, how *dare* we pretend to be able to understand why it is that those whom perhaps we seldom see, and to whom perhaps we seldom speak, do such and such things?

"My children, we must leave it to God to judge. If we are pained at what we cannot make out, it is not for us to condemn it; if we think any one we love is doing what is not right, or that any one we know is acting in a way that seems to us questionable, we must not condemn them, we must pray for them. We must wait until there is nothing to find fault with in ourselves, ere we judge others. We must cast the beam out of our own eye, and then we shall see clearly to pull out the mote that is in our brother's eye.

"Dear girls, we may be sitting in judgment upon some small fault of manner, or some little eccentricity of some kind which it is plain to

see, amongst our friends and companions, and deep down in our own hearts we may be cherishing some secret sin, unseen by mortal eye—known only to ourselves and to God. My dears, we may see the small mote in our brother's eye, and be unmindful of the great beam which is in our own eye, and which lets us see the faults of others, but keeps out the sight of God, and the thought of the gentle holy JESUS.

“Will you ask, when you kneel in Church this evening, my dear children, that He Who loves us all with such infinite, tender compassion, will make you merciful, and loving, and gentle to all around you?”

“The old girls” did not speak when Miss Harper ceased speaking. Perhaps the words had struck home to some of the young hearts that only ten minutes before had judged Rhoda Norris, with what they knew Miss Harper would have considered harsh judgment.

One morning in the autumn, Lottie Price met Rhoda, who was crying bitterly.

“What is it, Rhoda—what is the matter?” asked the girl, kindly.

“Oh, it’s nothing, Lottie, nothing at all, I know I ought to bear it; but they’ve told father

things of me that are not true, and now the Vicar and Miss Harper are in foreign parts, and there's no one to help me. And *she* passed me, and wouldn't so much as look at me ; and now we're all going away, and there'll not be no one near me to comfort me,—and oh, Lottie, Lottie, I can't bear it."

In time Lottie learned what it all meant. Tom Norris had told his child the night before that he had heard she was always walking about the streets at night, that Maggie Stanton's father had said that his girl had seen her often, and that no one would speak to her, because she was a disgrace to them all.

The poor girl did not say how she had been beaten, and knocked about, and how her back was smarting now from the effect of those cruel blows. But she did tell her secret—the secret she had kept for months.

"I've been a-washing up at the Rose and Crown of nights, Lottie ; nobody ever saw me there, for I was in the little back scullery, but 'twas to earn money for Alick and Jim, and the Vicar said I might go."

"Oh, Rhoda," and now Lottie's arms were round the poor child's neck, "oh, Rhoda, forgive me."

"Forgive you, Lottie? you've always been so good to Alick and Jim and me."

"No, no, I've judged you too; I've thought hardly of you too."

"'Twas enough to make you," answered poor Rhoda, meekly. "I thought you all knew it, I never thought to tell *any* of you. But it don't matter now, Lottie dear; we're going away very soon, father says, and he says I'm the cause of it."

"I will make it right, indeed I will, Rhoda; I will go to Maggie's father, and tell him all."

"Thank you, dear, but I'm afraid it's too late."

And Rhoda returned home to Jim and Alick, and Lottie, full of grief and indignation, went to tell her mother all her troubles.

Mr. and Miss Harper were away for a holiday, and all this cruel blow had come upon poor Rhoda, when there was no one in all her little world to whom she could turn for help. No one, did I say? True, into no earthly ear could the full extent of all her misery be poured; but Rhoda asked God to help her, and teach her what to do. And what cry of suffering—what supplication for help—ever went from a burdened

heart to heaven, and was disregarded by the FATHER of mercy and of love ?

That evening John Norris returned early from his work. "Come, pack up," he said, "we are off to Grantham by the mail train ; none of your shilly-shallying, put your clothes together—your rags, rather—and let's be off."

Rhoda dared not speak, there was nothing for her but to obey ; and when the first faint streaks of the rising autumn sun lit up the broken windows of the old cottage, they fell upon a bare, desolate room—for John Norris and his children had gone away from Earnscliff.

No one heard of them again. For many a long day Miss Harper and her brother tried to trace them, and failed, to their great grief.

Maggie Stanton never told any one of a little ill-spelt, ill-written note she had found pushed under the door, on that autumn night when Rhoda went away, and which said, "Maggie, please don't think bad of me ; I will pray for you always."

Years had passed away ; little Alick had gone from his life of suffering to what Rhoda felt sure was joy and peace. Jim had grown into a fine

tall lad, and went to work. And Rhoda? Happiness had come to the girl at last, even though Alick was no longer with her. John Norris was a changed man ; the boy's death had done its work, and made his father think of all the wrong-doing of his life. He had taken the pledge, and he was kind and good to his children, and went to Church with them on Sundays.

One night, Rhoda was walking through the streets of Grantham ; there may have been traces of the old untidiness still to be seen, but the girl's whole appearance was very different to what it had been when first we knew her. She had been to a Bible class, and was hurrying back to her father and Jim.

Suddenly she was accosted by a woman—a girl, I should say, except that upon the young face were traces of sickness and of sin.

“In pity give me a crust of bread.”

Rhoda turned very pale ; but in an instant her arm was round the poor thing's waist, and she said in a loving gentle voice, “Maggie, come home with me.”

And Maggie suffered herself to be led, like a tired, weary child, to Rhoda's home.

She told her father and Jim who her visitor was, and they took no notice of poor Maggie,

for Rhoda had begged them not to speak to her, and her word was law with those two.

She laid the weary one upon her own bed, and then Maggie said, "Oh, Rhoda, dear Rhoda, it's what Miss Harper said about the mote and the beam."

Another week, and Maggie's father and mother came to take her home—not to Earnscliff, but to a distant village, where the poor child lives a sorrowful, penitent life.

Last summer Rhoda was very happy, for she went on a visit to Lottie, and Miss Harper said the sight of the girl's bright face had made her feel young again.







